

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, March 17, 1997
Volume 33—Number 11
Pages 319–371

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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is published pursuant to the authority contained in the Federal Register Act (49 Stat. 500, as amended; 44 U.S.C. Ch. 15), under

regulations prescribed by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, approved by the President (37 FR 23607; 1 CFR Part 10).

Distribution is made only by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* will be furnished by mail to domestic subscribers for \$80.00 per year (\$137.00 for mailing first class) and to foreign subscribers for \$93.75 per year, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The charge for a single copy is \$3.00 (\$3.75 for foreign mailing).

There are no restrictions on the republication of material appearing in the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*.

Week Ending Friday, March 14, 1997

The President's Radio Address

March 8, 1997

Good morning. This week we learned that America's economy continues to grow steady and strong, creating almost 600,000 new jobs in the first 2 months of this year alone and about 12 million in the last 4 years. We can make this time one of enormous promise for America, but only if we make sure that all Americans who are willing to work have the chance to reap the rewards of our prosperity.

This morning I want to talk to you about what we can do to lift the permanent underclass into a thriving and growing middle class and to announce new steps the National Government will take to move people from welfare to work.

Four years ago, when I became President, I pledged to end welfare as we know it. We worked with States to launch welfare reform experiments to require work. We cracked down on child support enforcement, increasing child support payments by 50 percent. We required teen mothers to stay at school and live at home if they wanted to receive welfare. Today I'm pleased to report that due to these efforts and our growing economy, we've already moved 2.6 million people off the welfare rolls, a record number.

Last summer, we took the most dramatic step of all when I signed the bipartisan welfare reform legislation that imposed time limits, required work, and extended child care and health care so that people can move from welfare to work without hurting their children. The new law ended the old welfare system when we said to those on welfare: Responsibility is not an option; it must be a way of life.

Now, all the rest of us have our responsibility, indeed, our moral obligation, to make welfare reform work, to make sure that those who now must work, can work. We must move another 2 million more people off the welfare rolls in the next 4 years. And frankly,

we must recognize that many of these people will be harder to reach and will need more help than those who moved off the rolls in the past 4 years.

This cause must engage the energy and the commitment of everyone in our society, of business, houses of worship, labor unions, universities, civic organizations, as well as government at every level. Above all, we must harness the private sector to bring jobs and hope to our hardest pressed neighborhoods. We are working with leaders of American business to help mobilize other businesses to hire people off welfare. My balanced budget plan would give businesses tax incentives to hire people and would give job placement firms a bonus for every person they place from welfare into a job.

States can do more, too. I have called upon every State to use the power that has now been given to them under the new welfare law, to turn welfare checks into private sector paychecks. And the National Government must do its part and set an example. Our National Government is now the smallest it has been in three decades, but it is still the Nation's largest employer. We must do our part. So today I am committing a National Government action plan to hire people off welfare.

I am formally directing the heads of each agency and department of our Federal Government to do everything they can to hire people off the welfare rolls into available jobs in Government, consistent with the laws already on the books for hiring Federal workers. Because this effort is so important, I am asking Vice President Gore, who has led our reinventing Government effort and done so much to make our Government work better as it costs less, to oversee this endeavor.

I want these agencies to use the worker-trainee program, which the Government already has in place, to train workers quickly and move them into entry-level jobs. Then if the people do well for 3 years, they can

join the civil service. And I am asking every member of my Cabinet to prepare a detailed plan for hiring welfare recipients, what jobs they will fill, how they will recruit welfare recipients, how they will make sure these people have the chance to work hard, perform well and, thereby, deserve to keep their jobs. The members of the Cabinet will present these plans to me in one month at a special Cabinet meeting.

The job of moving people from welfare to work as the law requires will not be easy. But we must help them as they help themselves. And we need to help all low income Government workers. We need to make sure they take advantage of the earned-income tax credit, the tax cut that already has helped 15 million of our hardest pressed working families. We should give these workers help with transportation to work, and we must help them to find affordable child care.

Government can help to move people from welfare to work by acting the way we want all employers to act, demanding high performance from workers but going the extra mile to offer opportunity to those who have been on welfare and want to do something more with their lives. If we all do that, we can move into the 21st century strong, united, and with the American dream alive for all our people.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Memorandum on Government Employment for Welfare Recipients

March 8, 1997

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Government Employment for Welfare Recipients

Since I signed the historic welfare reform law, I have urged businesses, nonprofit organizations, and religious groups across the Nation to help make its promise of opportunity real by offering jobs to welfare recipients. We are making great progress, but there is more to do. And today, I take action to ensure that the Federal Government, as the Nation's

largest employer, contributes to the greatest extent possible to this national effort.

I therefore direct each of you, as head of an agency or department, to use all available hiring authorities, consistent with statute and prior executive memoranda, to hire people off the welfare rolls into available job positions in the Government.

In particular, I direct you to expand the use of the Worker-Trainee Program and other excepted service hiring authorities. The Worker-Trainee Program allows agencies to quickly and easily hire entry-level persons for up to 3 years, with the ability to convert the appointment to career status if the employee has performed satisfactorily. Though recently underutilized, the program allows agencies to bypass complex Federal personnel hiring rules and procedures to bring people into the junior grades of the work force.

I further direct you, in recognition of the different characteristics of the various agencies' work forces, to prepare an individualized plan for hiring welfare recipients and to submit that plan to me within 30 days. This plan should have three principal components:

- The plan should contain a survey indicating in which divisions and for which categories of positions your agency can most easily hire welfare recipients, both in the Washington, D.C. area, and in the field.
- The plan should describe in detail how the agency intends to recruit and hire qualified welfare recipients. This description should include a proposed local outreach program, and utilize Federal Executive Boards and Federal Executive Agencies to bring Federal job opportunities to the attention of welfare offices, State and private employment offices, nonprofit organizations, and others that work with welfare recipients on a regular basis. This program should build upon the Government's existing nationwide employment information systems.
- The plan should describe in detail how the agency will assist welfare recipients, once hired, to perform well and to keep their jobs. The agency should include in this aspect of the plan proposals for

on-the-job training and/or mentoring programs.

I expect each agency head to report to me about his or her plan at a special cabinet meeting called for that purpose. Following this meeting, I also expect monthly reports on implementation.

To ensure deep and continuing involvement in this issue by the White House, I ask the Vice President to oversee this effort. Based on his expertise in Federal workplace issues, he will assist all agencies in carrying out their commitments.

Finally, I direct appropriate agencies to take three steps that will help bring welfare recipients into the Federal work force while assisting all other low-income Federal employees.

- I direct each agency head to notify all employees eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) of both their eligibility and their ability to receive EITC monies each month in their paychecks. Currently, not all agencies inform qualifying employees of their eligibility and options for payment. To insure uniform implementation, I direct the Secretary of the Treasury to issue to each agency within 15 days a statement of EITC eligibility rules which agencies can use to inform their employees.
- I direct the General Services Administration (GSA) to issue within 30 days guidelines regarding use of the Federal Fare Subsidy Program. These guidelines should address whether agencies may offer fare subsidies based on employee income, which would enable more agencies to participate in the Fare Subsidy Program.
- I direct the GSA, after consultation with all Federal agencies, to report back to me within 30 days on plans to assist low-income Federal workers in finding affordable child care. This report shall include information on agency-sponsored child care centers and agency contracts with local child care resource and referral services, as well as recommendations on any appropriate expansion of these

arrangements to provide assistance to low-income Federal workers.

William J. Clinton

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and an Exchange With Reporters

March 10, 1997

President Clinton. Let me say that I'm very glad to welcome President Mubarak back to Washington. The United States and Egypt have been partners in the quest for peace in the Middle East for two decades now. Nothing positive has happened except when we work together, and I think it's important that we continue to do so. And I'm looking forward to this meeting to discuss that as well as what we can do to improve the relations between our two countries.

Welcome, Mr. President. I'm glad to see you.

President Mubarak. Thank you very much.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. President Mubarak, you're the leader of the first nation to begin a peace process with Israel. Do you buy President Clinton's rationale that he is preserving the peace process by, in effect, sanctioning the building of settlements in east Jerusalem?

President Mubarak. It is said in the memo that the President did change his mind concerning the settlements, but the statements coming out from the State Department and from the White House concerning the settlements—the President is a full partner in the peace process. Without the United States, it would be very difficult to continue the peace process. So it's very important to have his influence, his leadership, his activity——

Q. But he gave a green light with his veto.

President Clinton. We're going to have a press conference later.

President Mubarak. Yes.

President Clinton. And we're going to answer all the questions. But I don't think it's fair to say I've sanctioned that. We'll have

a press conference later. I'll answer more questions.

Q. Are you prepared to explain the veto, Mr. President—Clinton?

President Clinton. Sure. Yes, we'll have a press conference, and I'll answer all those questions. I'll be happy to answer that. And if no one gets to ask it, I will voluntarily answer it later.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying that it's a great honor for the United States to have President Mubarak back at the White House. His leadership for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East has been absolutely essential to any progress which has been made for 20 years now. We have worked closely together, and I'm looking forward to having this meeting.

Let me also say that we're going to have a press conference afterward, and we'll do our best to answer whatever questions you have.

Do you have anything you would like to say, Mr. President?

President Mubarak. Usually, I come to the United States to meet Mr. Clinton, for the United States is a full partner for the peace process, making tremendous efforts so the process will continue, so as to reach a comprehensive settlement and peace could prevail in the whole area and cooperation will continue among the countries in the Middle East.

I thank the President for his efforts, and we are going to discuss other issues now. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With President Mubarak

March 10, 1997

President Clinton. Good afternoon. I was glad to have the chance to welcome President Mubarak back to the White House. He has been a valued friend of the United States

for 16 years now, one of the very first leaders to visit me in 1993 and also one of the first now to come to Washington during my second term.

Through this meeting and through consultations with other leaders from the region, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, Chairman Arafat, and King Hussein, who will be here next week, we are working to help the parties find common ground through progress toward lasting peace. We know that these efforts cannot succeed without the leadership of Egypt.

Since the Camp David accords in 1979, Egypt has been a powerful force for peace in the Middle East. That has continued to be true through the last 3½ years, a time of extraordinary progress toward peace and repeated challenges. Now, as Israel and the Palestinians embark on the difficult task of permanent status negotiations, as we look to revive negotiations between Israel and Syria, and then bring Lebanon into the process to complete the circle of peace, we know that Egypt's leadership will be vital to finish the job.

In January, Israelis and Palestinians once again demonstrated that even though the challenges are great, the will to create peace is there. An agreement on difficult issues can be achieved through genuine negotiations. But we've also been reminded recently of how difficult it is to maintain the momentum toward peace. Clearly, we're at a moment when all those with a stake in the peace process must rededicate themselves to building confidence and making progress.

Today the United States and Egypt have deepened our own understanding in our partnership, our determination to coordinate our efforts even more closely, and to encourage the parties to tackle the tough questions ahead. We also discussed how we can increase our cooperation on issues of regional security and expand the ties of commerce between our people. Stability and security in the region demands that the people of Egypt and all the peoples of the Middle East are rewarded in their efforts by greater prosperity.

I congratulated President Mubarak on the strong economic advances Egypt has made in the last 2 years, the work that he and Vice

President Gore have done. And the U.S.-Egypt partnership for economic growth and development has made a real difference by promoting privatization and tariff reduction.

The President's Council, a group of business leaders from the United States and Egypt, has achieved dramatic success, increasing trade and investment between our nations and deepening support for necessary economic reforms. Now Egypt is creating new growth and opportunity, building a better future for its people and for others throughout the Middle East.

Mr. President, you and I have been together here at the White House, in Cairo, at the Summit of the Peacemakers at Sharm al-Sheikh, and elsewhere, working for a just and lasting peace and a new day in the region. Now we're in a new phase, and we have to protect the hard work and achievements of the last 3½ years, and we know we'll have to work hard to fulfill the hopes for the Middle East and for peace. I know we can look to you as a friend and partner, and I look forward to being your friend and partner on this historic mission.

Welcome.

President Mubarak. Ladies and gentlemen, I was very pleased to meet once again with President Clinton and exchange with him views and ideas of matters of common concern. Let me first seize the opportunity to congratulate the President on the reaffirmation of the American people's confidence in his wise and inspiring leadership. It is most reassuring for many to know that they have a knowledgeable and farsighted friend in the White House.

In our discussion today, we had the opportunity to review several issues of special interest to us. First, we reviewed recent developments of the Middle East peace process. While we are pleased by the progress which has been attained on the Israel-Palestinian track, we were alarmed by the differences and the complications that have appeared lately. Such developments make the peace process a fragile and vulnerable one. I'm referring here specifically to the Israeli settlement activities, particularly in Jerusalem.

We all know that the issue of Jerusalem is as sensitive to Muslims and to Christians as it is to Jews. Hence, the rights and senti-

ments of all these people should be fully respected.

It was for this reason that I urged Prime Minister Netanyahu to reconsider the decision taken by the Israeli Cabinet to authorize the construction of thousands of housing units for Israelis in East Jerusalem. I urged him also not to close the Palestinian office there. Our purpose here is to eliminate all potential sources of tension and violence. It is equally important to avoid any violation of the interim agreement and related documents. We view such actions as flagrant violations that would not serve any useful purpose.

At any rate, I agreed with the Prime Minister to stay in touch and deal with these and other issues with an open mind, in light of their sensitivity. We are looking forward to the carrying out of further redeployments in good faith. On the other hand, we hope that the two parties engage in the final status negotiations without delay. Time is of essence. Every day that goes by without attaining meaningful progress, hurt the chance of peace.

Our commitment to a comprehensive peace requires us to exert maximum effort in order to get the negotiations resumed on the Syrian and the Lebanese track. I have discussed the matter at length with President Asad and found him positively inclined. He reiterated serious commitment to a just and comprehensive peace settlement on the basis of the Madrid formula.

He believes, not without justification, that the talks should be resumed from the point where the parties had left off a year ago. There is no reason why we should waste the progress which was achieved through the strenuous negotiations in Washington and Wye plantation. I discussed the issue with Prime Minister Netanyahu, and it is my earnest hope that we can work out an acceptable formula for the resumption of talks with the help of the United States. I need not emphasize the importance of the Syrian and Lebanese track. We should never miss another opportunity for making progress and peace.

President Clinton has assured me of the fact that the U.S. position on these various issues remains unchanged. That's very reassuring, indeed. It reinforces confidence in

the U.S. as a reliable sponsor and a promoter of peace in the Middle East. We are determined to pursue our joint efforts in the months ahead with zeal and hope. Together, we shall achieve our goal.

Mr. President, we are both pleased with the progress that has been achieved in our bilateral relations. In recent years, U.S.-Egyptian relations have entered a new era, expanded into new spheres of cooperation, and reached greater depth and warmth.

Today I can say with confidence that we have an economy that is moving toward the future on solid ground. We have established the infrastructure to growth and to have instituted the necessary reforms and the policies that have placed Egypt in the forefront of the emerging economies, attracting substantial capital flows. We now look forward to years of sustainable high growth, greater investment, and a steady increase in the standard of living of all Egyptians. As we did in the previous stages, we regard the U.S. as one of our most trusted partners in peace and socioeconomic progress.

In conclusion, I would like to thank President Clinton and the American people for their continued support and help. You are undertaking an historic mission at this crucial crossroads. And thank you very much.

Jerusalem Settlements

Q. Mr. President, in casting a veto on a new Israeli settlement in the U.N., the U.S. went against the conscience and the consensus of the world. The general assumption is that Israel is trying to force, with military backing, a preemptive solution to the status of Jerusalem rather than going through negotiations as promised. Is that your read on it?

President Clinton. Well, let me answer the two questions at once there. We made it very clear that the decision to build in the Har Homa neighborhood, in our view, would not build confidence, would not be conducive to negotiations, would be seen by the Palestinians and others as an attempt to, in effect, precondition some of the final status issues. And that's why we said that we thought it was a complication we would prefer strongly that it not have been made.

On the other hand, we felt that the resolution of the Security Council was also ill-ad-

vised for the general reason that we generally prefer that the Security Council resolutions not be injected into the peace negotiations, first, and second, because there was specific language in this resolution that we have previously vetoed because we also feel it attempts to shape the final status negotiations.

I think that we have seen—we have learned one thing, I have, in the last 4 years plus, and that is when the parties get together and negotiate in good faith and take risks for peace, good things happen. When they attempt to preclude the process of negotiations or preempt it or are insensitive to the needs and the feelings of people in the negotiating process, more destructive things happen and it becomes more difficult to make peace.

So I feel that we did the right thing from the point of view of the United States and the United Nations. But that should not be interpreted as an approval of the decision that was made by the Israeli Government.

Q. You don't think the U.N. has a role in peacemaking?

President Clinton. Oh, yes, I do think the U.N. has a role. But I think—again, I say, go back and read the language of the resolution. Look at the position we've taken in previous votes with the same kind of language. And remember that we believe it's our job to try to protect the final status issues for the final status negotiations.

You know, I had this same issue on completely the other side last year and the year before when there was a big move in Congress to move the Embassy to Jerusalem. And I opposed it because I thought it was a way by indirection of our taking a position on the final status, which I don't think we should do, I don't think any of us should do. We have got to force these parties to—and to help to work to create an environment in which they make the decisions together in an atmosphere of genuine negotiations. And that's the position that I hold.

Would you like to call on an Egyptian journalist?

President Mubarak. Yes.

Q. A question to both heads of state. Under the fourth Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949, concerning the protection of civilians under occupation, the Palestinians of East Jerusalem should be protected from

confiscation of land. In Cairo, when Prime Minister Netanyahu came, he boiled down the problem of—the East Jerusalem settlement, to a mere housing problem and made the dangerous claim that settlements are built on Jewish land, ignoring the fact that he is building on occupied territory. Can you then blame the Palestinians if they should sort of revolt, each in his own way?

President Clinton. Who's going first, Mr. President? [Laughter]

President Mubarak. Please, Mr. Clinton.

President Clinton. First of all, it's obvious that who owns the land is disputed and that—but the reason that I took the position that it would be—that notwithstanding whatever housing needs do or don't exist, it would be better if the houses not be built in the neighborhood, the Har Homa neighborhood—that I knew that it would be perceived by the Palestinians in just the way you have stated. And what I think is important is—on the other hand, if I were to answer the question in the way that you have established it, it would also seem that we were deciding a final status issue the other way.

That's why the people who set up the Oslo agreements and the people who signed the Israel-PLO accord here in September of 1993, they were very smart. They knew how explosive all these issues were, and they knew that a lot of confidence had to be built up first. And they knew that, for example, the land transfers had to be worked out in the West Bank and Gaza and other issues had to be worked out before the issue surrounding Jerusalem could be resolved. And that is why I think all these things are so terribly difficult and why the best thing is, insofar as both parties can do so, to let them be resolved by negotiations and final status issues without interference by anyone from the outside.

Now, having said that, yes, I still believe it would be a terrible mistake for the Palestinians to resort to violence. Every time they have done it, they wind up losing. They wind up getting hurt. They have a democratically elected leader. They have made dramatic progress in self-government. We are urging always on the Israelis more opportunities to let them progress more economically. We are urging on Mr. Arafat more reforms

that will allow them to progress economically and politically. So I think that is the direction to go in. That's the direction that I support.

Do you want to answer the question, Mr. President?

President Mubarak. When Prime Minister Netanyahu was in Cairo last week, I opened this issue with him, and I discussed the issue of building new settlements in the area of Jerusalem. And I commented on his answers in the press conference, telling that this is illegal and this may create problems and we shouldn't touch the area of Jerusalem until the negotiations for the final status, as is the spirit of the Oslo agreement.

But he told me that "I'm building for both sides." But this is not satisfactory to persuade the Palestinians to accept this. We shouldn't build anything in the area of Jerusalem, although there is expansion and increase of population, until the negotiation of the final status come to an end. It will be much more convenient to both sides.

FBI and Alleged Chinese Efforts To Influence the 1996 Election

Q. Mr. President, two officials of the White House National Security Council were briefed by the FBI last June about suspicions that China was trying to influence the outcome of U.S. congressional elections, but supposedly this warning wasn't passed up the chain of command. Shouldn't the President be told when a foreign power is trying to influence U.S. elections, and isn't this the type of information you would want to know? And would this have raised a red flag about foreign contributions?

President Clinton. There are basically three things you've asked there. Let me try to—first of all, yes, the President should know. And I can tell you, if I had known about the reports—and again, these are reports; these are allegations; we have not reached a—as far as I know, no one in the Government has reached a conclusive decision about this. So it's very important not to accuse people of something that you don't know they have done. But had we known about the reports, the first thing I would have done is I would have given them to Leon Panetta and to Tony Lake and to Sandy Berger, and I'd say, "Listen, look at these,

evaluate them, and make recommendations about what, if any, changes we ought to make or what should we be alert to." So it would have provoked at least to that extent a red flag on my part.

Now, let's go back to the first question. I absolutely did not know it was done. It is my understanding that two members of the National Security Council were briefed by the FBI, and then the agent, for whatever reasons, asked that they not share the briefing, and they honored the request. And we did not know at any time between—for the rest of the year. We just didn't know, and certainly during the election period we did not know. And why that is, I don't know. But anyway, that happened.

So Mr. Berger has discussed this with the White House Counsel, and they are reviewing the whole episode to try to see what, if any, action is appropriate and what should have been done. But yes, I believe I should have known; no, I didn't know. If I had known, I would have asked the NSC and the Chief of Staff to look at the evidence and make whatever recommendations were appropriate.

Q. Are you going to ask Director Freeh why you weren't told?

President Clinton. I'm going to wait for a—for the National Security Council and the White House Counsel to get back to me on the whole episode and tell me what the facts were and what they think should have happened. And then I'll make whatever decision is appropriate then.

Jerusalem Settlements

Q. The question is for President Bill Clinton. The American administration has always been voicing its concern over the settlement issue. I want to revisit this issue again, if you will allow me. And you first described it as illegal and then as an obstacle to peace and as building mistrust and now dubbed it as a mere difficulty to peace. And a couple of days ago you vetoed a moderate decision by the United Nations over that issue.

Well, you've explained the position of the U.S. administration, but it looks—it's a little bit puzzling for us in the Arab world to understand that position, because don't you think that such a position places the U.S.

credibility as an honest peace broker in question? And secondly, doesn't such a position also make the United States interests in the Arab world in jeopardy?

Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, let me say, first of all, in all candor, I'm very concerned about that. I'm concerned about—and I was very aware of how the veto might make the United States look in the Arab world, because I have worked very hard, as I told Mr. Arafat when he was here, to be fair to the Palestinians and fair to all the parties in the Middle East peace process and to see that their legitimate interests are advanced. And I worked hard to avoid, frankly, having a Security Council resolution. We were prepared to support a rather strong statement, Presidential statement, as an alternative.

But I think it's important—and I would say to the people in the Arab world who are looking at this and wondering what we're up to here, I'd like to say, you have to remember a couple of things.

Number one, if you go back and read that resolution, we have had a consistent position, even though I have abstained in some resolutions, I haven't vetoed all the resolutions criticizing Israel, but even though I have abstained in some, we've had a consistent position that we can never achieve peace through U.N. Security Council resolutions, number one.

Number two, there is language in this particular resolution which is identical to language that we have felt constrained to veto in the past because we felt that it, too, prejudged the final status.

And number three, I would say, just the way you asked the question makes my point. For the Arab world, the building in Har Homa is a settlement and, therefore, a violation. For the Israelis, they are building in a neighborhood that is already a part of their territory. So they are—they strongly dispute that it is a settlement in the sense that they admit other settlements exist.

Now, that very point makes a point I tried to make, which is why I believe the decision should not have been made. This should be part of the final status negotiations. Everything surrounding Jerusalem is of immense emotional, political, and religious signifi-

cance to all the parties involved here. That's why they wisely put it as a final status issue. And the only thing I can say to you is that you may disagree with this decision, but if you look at what I've done for the last 4 years and what I intend to do, I am trying to get to a point where the parties themselves can honestly make a just, fair, and lasting peace. And I will not do anything that I think undermines the ability of the United States to stand for that.

Gene [Gene Gibbon, Reuters].

FBI and Alleged Chinese Efforts To Influence the 1996 Election

Q. Mr. President, you don't seem particularly angry with the information about what's—the allegations that a foreign power was trying to subvert the U.S. elections was not brought to your attention. You're the person ultimately in charge of U.S. national security. I'm just wondering why you wouldn't pick up the phone and demand of Director Freeh why you weren't told. You certainly were the one person who probably should have known that information.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, what I seem and what I feel may be two different things. [Laughter] The older I get, the more I become aware of the fact that there's some things that there's no point in expending a lot of energy on. It didn't happen. It should have happened. It was a mistake.

But what I want to do now is—first of all, let's go back to the beginning here of when this came up—whenever it did, several weeks ago. The first thing we have to do is to allow the investigation to proceed, to find out—this is a very serious allegation, but as far as I know, it is only that. And it would be very serious if it were true. But it would also be a foolish error. Anyone who understands the sort of interplay of American politics, the scope and scale of the issues, the amount of investment involved, I mean, it just wouldn't make much sense. But it's a very serious thing.

The first and foremost thing we have to do is—now let's find out what the truth is, if we can, first. Second, let's find out exactly how this happened—which is why I asked the Counsel and the NSC to look into it—

that is, what did these agents say? Were they instructed to say that? Did they just think it would be a good idea? Why did they do that? What was involved? We don't know the answers to a lot of questions.

So, Gene, until I know the answers to these questions, I think it's better for us to calm, to be disciplined, to be firm, to be straightforward. There's no point in shedding more heat than light on this. I'm interested in light being shed on this situation, and then as we know the facts, we'll all be able to make our judgments then about what should have been done and what we should do from here forward.

Final Status Negotiations

Q. Both of you have spoken about Jerusalem and how it should be only discussed in the final status negotiations. But these negotiations are supposed to start in 4 days, in fact. Do you believe that this deadline will be met, and if not, how will this affect the peace process?

President Mubarak. You're asking me? Both of us. You start, Mr. President.

President Clinton. I went first last time. That's not fair. [Laughter] Let me say, the deadline may not be met, but the important thing is to find the basis on which the parties can resume negotiations. I have been very impressed by how gifted the Palestinian negotiating team has been and how gifted the Israeli team has been. For anyone to just even look at the maps on Hebron, it's a stunning achievement, really, that they could come to grips with all this, the complexity of it.

But whether they're prepared to go on right now or whether we're going to have to figure out some way to build the confidence back to jumpstart it, we'll see. But if they don't start in 4 days, they're going to have to start sooner or later, or there won't be peace. So I would just bear down and keep working hard to try to get them back together, if they don't meet in 4 days.

President Mubarak. Concerning the Palestinians?

President Clinton. Yes. The Palestinians and the Israelis, yes.

President Mubarak. I know the problem between the Palestinians and the Israelis is

so complicated, anyway at least for this specific period of time, especially the rate of re-deployment in Area C, which has been declared yesterday about 2.1 percent. I think it needs much more effort from the United States and Egypt to just persuade the two parts and find the solution for this so the negotiation could resume, especially the negotiation for the final status, which is very important, which could decide the whole thing at the end.

Welfare Reform

Q. Mr. President, with the welfare reform issue that you've been dealing with lately, and that's one of your main focuses, are you looking to hire welfare recipients here at the White House in the very near future, because you've gotten a lot of flack from civil rights groups as well as from the business community?

President Clinton. Well, let me just say the rules—the White House will be covered like everybody else, with the instruction that I sent out, which is that everyone will—each unit of Government under the various departments will have to send back a plan for what they might be able to do to hire welfare recipients. And then we will have our approach that will include every department in the Government, including the White House. So it depends. Here, it depends upon whether vacancies occur and in what area. But if they do, I certainly wouldn't rule it out, and I would want to rule it in. That is, I'd like to see us set an example, if we have a chance to do so.

Keep in mind, we have reduced the size of the Federal Government by about 285,000 now from the day I took office. But there are still enough vacancies every year that we can make a substantial contribution to the Nation's goal of having a million people move into jobs from welfare over the next 4 years. And yes, I'd like it very much if one of them was in the White House.

Jerusalem Settlements

Q. Mr. President Mubarak, you announced yesterday on CNN that you are going to ask Mr. Clinton to use his influence in Israel to stop carrying out the building of more settlement in Jerusalem. Did you raise

this matter with His Excellency, and what is his reaction about that?

President Mubarak. I think I raised the question of the problem of the Middle East as such and as a whole, and we discussed the issue of the settlement activities. And it is well-known that the United States didn't change its mind, contending that building more settlements, changing the situation is illegal, runs against—creating a problem in the Middle East. We didn't differ in that issue.

President Clinton. We have to take a couple of more, because President Mubarak and I promised this lady she could have—Trudy [Trudy Feldman, *Trans Features*], do you have a question? And then we'll call on you.

Egypt's Economy

Q. For President Mubarak. May I? President, since you began privatizing your economy, foreign investors have shown increased interest in Egypt. So are you now a convert to free market economics—[inaudible]—private sector?

President Mubarak. Oh, sure. I'm inviting any of us who could come. We have changed the laws. We have market economy. We are open to any investors to come and work with us. And mind you, a couple of days ago we have about 17 or 18 businessmen from Israel and other places. And they ask of me if I could give green light to the business people to help there. I told them the green light has already been given years ago, and this depends only on the political atmosphere. But we never prevent anybody to work here or there, or we will not stop and stand against any of us to come to invest in Egypt. And we welcome them at any time.

Q. So you've become a convert?

President Clinton. I think we have just heard the Egyptian version of "Show me the money." [Laughter] There's a movie that was made in the United States about a sports agent, Mr. President, and they were always saying, "Show me the money."

Now, this lady, we promised her she could ask a question, didn't we?

President Mubarak. Yes, of course.

U.S. Veto of U.N. Resolution on Jerusalem

Q. A question for both Presidents, please. The whole Arab world was disappointed by the veto. Don't you think, first, that this policy pursued by the U.S. could encourage Israel to build more settlements inside Jerusalem which would make an obstacle—new obstacles to the peace process? And if you have discussed any new Syrian—any new ideas to push forward the Syrian track?

President Clinton. Yes, the answer to your first question is, it would—it might be seen as encouraging the present Israeli Government to do that if we had stated that we were vetoing the resolution because we agreed with Israel's decision. But we've made it clear we do not agree with Israel's decision and we—that we have to go back to the negotiations. So for that reason, I do not believe so.

Second question is, yes, we did. We had a very long, good detailed discussion about what we might do together to get the Syrian negotiations back on track. And we've both agreed now to go out and do a few things to try to see if we can't make that happen. Whether we can, of course, is up to President Asad and Prime Minister Netanyahu. But we believe it's important, and we believe that there is at least a potential there that the parties could reach across the ground that divides them.

President Mubarak. I may say concerning the veto that it's unfortunate that the resolution was not adopted because it might have given a signal to the Israelis to stop any settlement activities, especially in the area of Jerusalem, which is illegal. But I hope in the future we could avoid this.

President Clinton. Okay, one more from each. Go ahead.

Congressional Action on Certification for Mexico

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. It seems like the Congress is trying to reverse your decision to certify Mexico. What are you going to do about it? And are you trying to ask Mexico some gesture in their part to strengthen your hand in Congress?

President Clinton. Well, first let me say, what we're going to do about it is we're going to make a full-court press to bring the admin-

istration's position and perspective to the Members of Congress before they vote at large. In fairness to the committee, which voted overwhelmingly against my position last week in the House, we really hadn't had much of a chance to have a discussion with them. And I don't think that there is a great difference about the facts here. The question is, which action by the United States, number one, is required by the law, and number two, is most likely to reduce the drug problem in the United States and in Mexico?

Now, the law says that we should certify Mexico if the government is fully cooperating and if there is some evidence of progress being made. Now, does the fact that the President announced that the drug czar was being dismissed for corruption mean that the government has not been cooperating or the government has been cooperating? I believe it's evidence that the government is cooperating.

Secondly, they have dismissed 1,200 other public officials in the last year because of corruption or suspected corruption. And then let's look at the other issue, have they gotten results? We have record numbers of eradications, arrests, and seizures of drugs. We have the first extraditions in history of suspected criminals, charged criminals, from Mexico to the United States. We have an agreement between Mexico and General McCaffrey to work together to design a strategy.

I think what we need to do is find a way to work with the Congress to see what the next steps are going to be. I think if Congress says, "If you want us to certify, we've got to know what the next steps are going to be," I think it's legitimate for the Congress to know that. And I think that President Zedillo and I both want to demonstrate—and I hope we will on my trip to Mexico—that we've got a plan to do this that's good for America, good for Mexico, and basically good for our entire region.

But I strongly feel we should certify them. That's the recommendation Secretary Albright has made to me. I think she was right, and I'm going to do my best to persuade the Congress that we're right.

President Clinton. Thank you.

President Mubarak. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 138th news conference began at 2:36 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; King Hussein I of Jordan; President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria; and President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico.

Statement on Senator Wendell H. Ford's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

March 10, 1997

Senator Wendell Ford has served his home State of Kentucky with pride and distinction for four terms as a Member of the U.S. Senate. He has been a leader in the Democratic Party and a personal friend for many years. Senator Ford's tireless efforts as a veteran, businessman, Lieutenant Governor, and Governor before coming to Washington, have earned him the admiration of all who know him. I will miss his leadership and advice on Capitol Hill but know that he will continue to find ways to improve the lives of the constituents he has served so well for so long. Kentucky and the Nation are better for his dedication and service. Hillary and I wish him, his wife, Jean, and their family well in the years to come.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Report on Peacekeeping Operations

March 10, 1997

Dear _____:

Enclosed is a copy of the 1996 Annual Report to the Congress on Peacekeeping, pursuant to section 407(d) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (Public Law 103-236).

Once again in 1996, multilateral peacekeeping operations proved their worth in helping to defuse conflict and alleviate humanitarian crises around the world. Our support for the United Nations and other peacekeeping options allows us to protect our interests before they are directly threatened and ensures that others share with us the risks and costs of maintaining stability in the post-Cold War world.

The concerted efforts we have made over the past few years have brought greater discipline to peacekeeping decision-making in national capitals and at the United Nations. Tough questions about the mandate, size, cost, duration, and exit strategy for proposed missions are asked and answered before they are approved. Careful attention is also given to ensuring that those responsible for leading the mission—whether the United Nations, NATO, or a coalition of concerned states—are capable of doing the job at hand.

I hope you will find the enclosed report a valuable and informative account of how the United States uses peacekeeping to promote stability and protect its interests. It is important that peacekeeping remain a viable choice when we face situations in which neither inaction nor unilateral American intervention is appropriate. To that end, I look forward to working with you on my proposal to continue our reform efforts at the United Nations and to pay off our peacekeeping debt.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Strom Thurmond, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Ted Stevens, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations; Robert L. Livingston, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations; and Floyd Spence, chairman, House Committee on National Security.

Remarks to the Conference on Free TV and Political Reform and an Exchange With Reporters

March 11, 1997

The President. Thank you. What a gift. [Laughter] Thank you, Walter Cronkite. Thank you, Paul Taylor, for your passion and your commitment. Thank you, Senator McCain, Chairman Hundt, Ann McBride, Becky Cain. And thank you, Barry Diller, for what you have said about this important issue. I am delighted to have the chance to come here today, and I thank the sponsors of this event.

Again, let me say that I participated in the last election in the free television offered by the networks. Thanks to the efforts of Paul Taylor and Walter Cronkite and the members of the Straight Talk Coalition, Senator Dole and I were given a unique opportunity to talk directly to the voters—no gimmicks, no flashy graphics—a full minute or two at a time. And I really enjoyed it. I put a lot of effort into those opportunities, and I'm sure that Senator Dole did as well. I felt that they were a great gift.

And Walter and I had a talk backstage before we came out about how it might even be done better in the next round of elections. Maybe my opinions will carry more weight on such matters since I never expect to run again for anything. And I do believe that the free television was a very important thing. I think if it could be done, as we were discussing, at the same time every evening on a given network and back to back so that the candidates can be seen in a comparative context, I think it would be even more valuable.

We have to do some things to improve the way our political system works at election time and the way it communicates, or its leaders communicate, to people all year around. This should not be surprising to anyone. The Founding Fathers understood that we were an experiment. We're still around after all of these years because we have relished the idea that we are an experiment, that America is a work in progress, that we're constantly in the making. We always have to change.

A lot of good things have happened to expand participation in the political system from the time we were a new nation, when only white male property owners could vote, and we have to make some more changes now. But if you look at the changes which have been made in the last 200 years, we should be hopeful.

Television has the power to expand the franchise or to shrink the franchise. Indeed, that is true of all means of communications and all media. We know that television is a profound and powerful force. We know that we don't fully understand all of its implications—even what you said, Walter, we don't really know what the connection is between television and a diminished voter turnout. It

could be because there is a poll on television every night that tells people about the election, so some people think that there's no point in their voting, because the person they're for is going to win anyway or the person they're for can't win anyway.

We need to think about that, and that's not the subject of this meeting, but we need to—we really need—all of us need more information, more research, about why people vote and why they don't vote. There was a very—I've seen one survey, done I believe for the Democratic Leadership Council, of the nonvoters. It's a poll that doesn't pay off. You know, it was done, after the election, of the nonvoters. But it was very interesting, and some of the findings were quite counterintuitive about why people did or didn't vote. But I would urge those of you who are interested in it to get that, look at it, and think about what new work could be done to look into that.

Today we want to talk about whether the medium of free television could be used to diminish the impact of excessive money in politics and about whether it can be used, therefore, to reform our system in a way that makes it better and, ultimately, that leads to better decisions for the American people. It is now commonplace—everybody will tell you—that campaigns cost too much and it takes too much time to raise the money and the more money you raise from a larger number of people, the more questions will be raised about that.

Major party committees spent over 3 times as much in this last election cycle as 4 years before. And that doesn't count the third party expenditures, both the genuinely independent third party committees and those that weren't really independent although they claim to be. Spending in congressional campaigns has risen sixfold in the last two decades. That's over 3 times the rate of inflation. The biggest reason for this is the rise in the cost of television. But of course, there is also now more money being spent on mail, on telephoning, on radio, and on other print advertising as well.

In 1972, candidates spent \$25 million for political ads; in 1996, \$400 million. Presidential campaigns now routinely spend two-thirds or more of their money on paid ads;

Senate candidates, 42 percent of their money on television; House races, about a third. Interestingly enough, that's often because there is no single television market which just overlaps a House district and often the cost is prohibitive, particularly in the urban districts. But you get the drift; it's the same everywhere.

We are the only major democracy in the world where candidates have to raise larger and larger sums of money simply to communicate with voters through the medium that matters most. Every other major democracy offers candidates or parties free air time to speak to voters, and we can plainly do better, building on the big first step urged by this group in 1996. We have an obligation to restore our campaign finance system to a system that has the broad confidence of the American people but also of the American press that comments on it. In order to do that, television has to be part of the solution. I have said before and I will say again, everybody who has been involved in this system has to take responsibility for it and for changing it.

Those of us in public life know better than anybody else what the demands of prevailing in the present system are, and those who control the airwaves understand it well also. First and most fundamentally, I came here to support Senator McCain. We have to take advantage of this year to pass campaign finance reform. The campaign finance laws are two decades out of date. They have been overtaken by events, by dramatic changes in the nature and cost of campaigns and the flood of money that has followed them. The money has been raised and spent in ways that simply could not have been imagined when the people who fashioned the last campaign finance law in Congress did it.

They did the best they could, and I will say again, I believe that they did a good thing and that that law did improve the financing of our campaigns and restored a level of confidence to our politics and made things better. It is simply that time has changed, and we need new changes to reflect the things that have happened in the last 20 years.

It will not be easy to do this, but the situation is far from hopeless. After all, the first thing I want to say is, the American people

do care about this, and our politics, I think, in terms of traditional honesty, is getting better, not worse. I have asked over a dozen people, just in the last 2 years, who have been living in Washington for the last 30 years, who have been in politics—the most recent person I asked was Senator Dole—whether politics was more or less honest today than it was 30 years ago, and all 12 or 15—however many I asked—all gave the same answer. They said it's more honest today than it was 30 years ago. I think that's where we have to start.

It is important to put this in the proper perspective, if you want people in Congress to vote to change it. They cannot be asked to admit that they are doing something that they're not or that they are participating in dragging the country down the drain, because anybody who knows what went on 30 years ago and what goes on today would have to say that the system is still better than it was then. On the other hand, anybody who denied that, at an exponential pace, changes are occurring which imperil the integrity of the electoral process and the financing of campaigns, would also be badly amiss.

The second thing I'd like to say is, we should be hopeful because we have seen over the last 4 years, in other contexts, real bipartisan processes to improve the way politics works, not in campaign finance reform, but there was bipartisan support for the motor voter law, for the lobby disclosure overhaul, that was the first one in 50 years, in which Congress banned meals and gifts from lobbyists to lawmakers but also required much more disclosure. And that's the most important thing. When you get 100 percent disclosure of an area where there hasn't been any before, then that offers all of you in the press the opportunity to communicate to the American people what the activities of lobbyists are and to let them and you draw your own conclusions in terms of the results produced by decisionmakers. We required Congress to live under the same that they impose upon the private sector.

Every single one of these things has happened in the last 4 years with broad, bipartisan support. So I think it is very, very important that we recognize this will not happen unless there is bipartisan support. But there

is evidence that if the environment is right, if the support is deep enough, if the calls are strong enough and positive enough, we can get this kind of change.

Now, let me also say that I think it's important to make this point, because I see all these surveys that say that campaign finance reform is important to people, but if you rank it on a list of 10 things, it will always rank 10th behind balancing the budget, education, an all this. That can be used by politicians as an excuse, if you will, not to deal with it. They say, "Well, look at all these surveys. Campaign finance reform—sure, people like it—but it's not as important to them as whether we'll have national standards for reading and math," for example, one of my passions.

What we have to do is to make a connection between the two for the American people. What we have to argue is, yes, we really need to be up here doing the public's business. We need to be balancing the budget, improving education, reforming welfare, expanding health care coverage to children who don't have it, passing a juvenile justice reform, the kinds of things that I'm passionately interested in.

But having the right kind of campaign finance reform system and having the right kind of straight talk on television and having issues be more—elections be more issue-oriented and having the debates of both sides heard clearly by all people and increasing voter interest and voter turnout, all these things will increase the likelihood that this laundry list of good things will be done and will be done in better fashion than would otherwise be the case. I think it is very important that those of you who care about this make this connection because that's how to build broad and deep support for this endeavor.

It seems to me that we do have an historic opportunity to pass campaign finance reform. And I think the public owes a lot of gratitude to Senator McCain and Senator Feingold and Congressman Shays and Congressman Meehan and all of their supporters for the legislation they have offered. It is real and tough. It would level the playing field and reduce the role of big money in politics. It would set voluntary limits on campaign spending and ban soft money, all corporate

contributions, and the very large individual ones. It would restrict the role of political action committees and lobbyists and make needed reforms within the confines of the Constitution as defined by existing Supreme Court case law.

In all these ways, it would set ceilings on money in politics, and just as important, it would also provide a floor. And I think that is very important—it would also provide a floor. You actually have some Members in Congress who come from districts where there's a very low per capita income, for example, who are very afraid of campaign finance reform because they're afraid, among their own constituents, they'll never be able to raise enough money in their district to compete the first time a multimillionaire runs against them.

So the law has to give a floor. And McCain-Feingold does that by giving candidates free air time to talk directly to the voters if they observe the spending limits of the law. And we need to emphasize that any ceiling law should have a floor to guarantee that people have their say and are heard. It gives candidates deeply discounted rates for the purchase of time if they observe the limits of the law. In all these ways, it will level the playing field, giving new voices a chance to be heard and being fair to both parties.

I have supported the idea of free TV time for many years. When the Vice President was in Congress, he actually introduced legislation to require it. It was first proposed by President Kennedy in 1962. It has been around long enough. We now tried it in the last election more than ever before, and we know that it advances the public interest.

In my State of the Union Address, I asked Congress to pass the McCain-Feingold bill by July 4th, the day we celebrate the birth of our democracy. I pledge to you that I will continue to work with members of both parties to do this. I will be mustering more support out in the country—and that will be announced over the next few weeks—for this endeavor.

We have to use the present intense interest in this, as well as the controversy over fundraising in the last election and all the publicity on it, as a spur to action. We cannot

let it become what it is in danger of becoming, which is an excuse for inaction.

And that again is something that I challenge all of you on. Do not let the controversy become an excuse to do nothing and to wallow around in it. Use it as a spur to changing the system, because until you change the system, you will continue to have controversies over the amount—the sheer amount—of money that is raised in these elections.

The second thing I'd like to discuss is what Walter talked about in some detail, and that is how broadcasters can meet their public interest obligations in this era. Ever since the FCC was created, broadcasters have had a compact with the public. In return for the public airwaves, they must meet public interest obligations. The bargain has been good for the industry and good for the public. Now, startling new technologies are shaking and remaking the world of telecommunications. They've opened wider opportunities for broadcasters than ever before, but they also offer us the chance to open wider vistas for our democracy as well.

The move from analog signals to digital ones will give each broadcaster much more signal capacity than they have today. The broadcasters asked Congress to be given this new access to the public airwaves without charge. I believe, therefore, it is time to update broadcasters' public interest obligations to meet the demands of the new times and the new technological realities. I believe broadcasters who receive digital licenses should provide free air time for candidates, and I believe the FCC should act to require free air time for candidates.

The telecommunications revolution can help to transform our system so that once again voters have the loudest voice in our democracy. Free time for candidates can help free our democracy from the grip of big money. I hope all of you will support that. There are many ways that this could be done. Many of you here have put forward innovative plans. I believe the free time should be available to all qualified Federal candidates. I believe it should give candidates a chance to talk directly to the voters without gimmicks or intermediaries. Because campaign finance reform is so important, I believe it should be available especially to candidates

who limit their own spending. It is clear under the Supreme Court decision that this can be done, and I believe that is how it should be done.

Candidates should be able to talk to voters based on the strength of their ideas, not the size of their pocketbooks, and all voters should know that no candidate is kept from running simply because he or she cannot raise enormous amounts of funds.

Last month, the Vice President announced that we would create an independent advisory committee of experts, industry representatives, public interest advocates, and others to recommend what steps to take. Before I came over here today, I signed an Executive order creating that committee. The balanced panel I will appoint will advise me on ways we can move forward and make a judgment as to what the new public interest obligations of broadcasters might be. But today, let us simply agree on the basic premise. In 1997, for broadcasters, serving the public should mean enhancing our democracy.

Finally, let me challenge the broadcasters as well. Broadcasters are not the problem, but broadcasting must be the solution. The step the broadcasters took in this last election, as I have said over and over again in other forums, with the encouragement of Straight Talk for TV, was a real breakthrough. Now I ask broadcasters to follow up on this experiment in democracy, and I'm especially pleased that a leader in the industry, Barry Diller, has challenged his colleagues to open up the airwaves to candidates. He has made clear, forcefully and very publicly, that he and all of his colleagues have an obligation to society, and his presence here today makes it clear that he is willing to assume the mantle of leadership. But surely there are others—I know there are—who will gladly join in and take up this cause as well.

There are many questions about political reform. Many skeptics will look at all proposed reform measures and ask whether they'll work and whether there will be unintended consequences. The truth is that they will work and there will be unintended consequences.

But if we use that for an excuse not to change, no good change in this country would ever have come about. There will always be something we cannot foresee. That's what makes life interesting and keeps us all humble, but that must not be an excuse for our refusing to act in this area. We know—we know—when we work to expand our democracy, when you give people a greater voice and advocates of all political views a firm platform upon which to stand, we are moving forward as a nation. By passing campaign finance reform, by renewing the compact between broadcasters and the public to better serve in this new era, we can do that again.

And I will say again, I will do all I can on both these fronts, on campaign finance reform legislation and on requiring free use, free availability of the airwaves to public candidates. We need your support for both, and we need broader and more intense public support. And again I say, that has to be built by demonstrating to the public that this is not an inside-the-beltway exercise in both parties trying to find ways to undermine each other but a necessary way of opening our democracy so that we can better, more quickly, and more profoundly address the real challenges facing the American people in their everyday lives. These two steps will help, and together I hope we can make them this year.

Thank you very much.

1996 Elections

Q. Mr. President.

The President. Hello, Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News Service].

Q. I want to know—you said that you would not have been reelected had you not raised that money—

The President. I think—no, I think I probably—I might have been, because I'm the President and a President has unusual access to the public. And you have the Presidential debates, which are unique in terms of their viewership and their potential impact. But I believe that if you just look at the races for Congress and the number of votes that changed just in the last 5 days and how the votes were counted when the votes changed and the movement changed, there is no question that the amount of money de-

ployed in an intelligent way can have a profound impact on the outcome of these elections. And what you want to do is to make sure that everybody has the same fair chance at the voters and nobody has an excessive chance. And given the Supreme Court cases, the way the McCain-Feingold bill is drawn up, plus the effort to get more free air time, are the best responses to overcome the undue influence of excessive money.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. at the National Press Club. In his remarks, he referred to Walter Cronkite, chair, and Paul Taylor, executive director, Free TV for Straight Talk Coalition; Ann McBride, president, Common Cause; Becky Cain, president, National League of Women Voters; and Barry Diller, former chairman, Fox Broadcasting.

Remarks Announcing the Economic Plan for the District of Columbia

March 11, 1997

Thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. Vice President, Representative Norton, Representative Moran, members of the administration, Mr. Mayor, Chairman Brimmer, Mr. Evans, and especially all the citizens of the District of Columbia who are here today. You know, every year millions of visitors come here, but even those who don't come know a good deal about our Capital. America's eyes and the eyes of the world constantly focus on Washington. They see the good, and there is much good.

There is history here, everywhere, tremendous resources and talent from all over the world. But there is more as well. There are the people of the District, some of whose families have lived here for generations. They are hardworking, and they are committed to making the community and their neighborhoods better. There are businesses which strive to make it, sometimes under very difficult conditions. There is much dedication and much heart.

In my State of the Union Address, I said that we have to renew our Capital City, to make it the finest place to learn, to work, and to live, because people here deserve no less and because the District matters beyond

the city limits. The city is every American's home, and it should be every American's pride. Our Capital City must reflect the best of who we are, what we hope to become, and where we are going.

Washington started as a planned city. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and a soldier and architect name Pierre L'Enfant shared a vision of order and beauty. The boulevards, the museums, the monuments reflect their vision. But this is a different time, and our city needs a new and different vision, one that reaches where the magnificent vistas end; one that touches our schools where too often books and teachers are in short supply; our streets where too often children are robbed of their futures, their freedom, and law-abiding citizens too often live in fear of the few who break the law; one that touches the lives of those who want to be responsible in work but lack the opportunity to do so; one that makes businesses want to locate here, to create jobs here, to give the community new economic life and spirit and vitality.

Our strategy must begin to reset the course for a better life for all who call the District home. Our challenge is to revitalize the city as the Nation's Capital, to improve the prospects of self-government to succeed, and to make it a place where people really want to live, to work, to do business. We can clearly do this.

From New York to Chicago to San Francisco we have seen new life brought to urban areas. Unemployment is down. Crime is down. Things are looking up. We know that if we empower people and we help them within the economic framework, they will do the rest, and that is the heart of our strategy.

Of course, our Capital City faces enormous challenges. Of course, these challenges are, to some extent, unique to DC and have been a long time in the making. But at least now we have a plan, and we are committed. More of you, in more ways than I have ever seen before, are committed. We at the Federal level must help our Capital City to lift itself to the point where it can be a model for the Nation for revitalization. Working together, we can and we must make Washington once again the proud face America shows to the world.

As the Vice President said, there are steps which have been taken already, but now it's time for the next step, our economic plan for the District of Columbia, an important piece of a larger strategy, to build on the work begun and on what we have learned from success stories in other cities about what actually is working there. It reflects our agenda to revitalize urban America. It addresses the unique needs of the District. It recognizes that only the people of the District can lift it up in the end, so it gives people the tools to do the job.

Our \$300 million plan has two parts. First, it will provide \$250 million in Federal tax incentives for jobs and capital to strengthen the economic base in our Capital City. Second, it will provide \$50 million in Federal commitment to help capitalize a new, non-Federal public-private partnership, the DC Economic Development Corporation.

The corporation will develop an economic development strategy, coordinate large-scale development projects, support efforts to create jobs and business opportunities. It will have broad powers to facilitate many existing plans such as the Monumental Corps, the Downtown Interactive, and the New York Avenue plans. The Economic Development Corporation will be authorized to allocate a new DC Capital credit, which will provide \$95 million in tax credits for investors in and lenders to DC businesses. These credits will be worth up to 25 percent of the amount invested or borrowed. This will help to bring and keep businesses where jobs are needed, and they will be given on a competitive basis to investors and lenders who can do the most for the District and its people.

The corporation will also have authority to issue tax-exempt private activity bonds to finance businesses in hard-hit areas. And it will be able to receive transfers of land or development rights from the Federal Government and from others. It will work with the National Capital Infrastructure Commission we're creating to make certain that infrastructure and economic development build on each other.

The corporation will be a driving force for our Capital's renewal, for it to take its rightful place in the fast-growing economy of this region and in our Nation. The Federal Govern-

ment's investment of \$50 million in the corporation is just a start. Our goal is to involve all sectors of the economy in helping the District.

Our plan also includes a new DC jobs credit, available to businesses in the District that hire low- or moderate-income residents living in economically distressed areas. It would provide a 40 percent tax credit on the first \$10,000 of eligible wages in the first year of employment. This jobs credit builds on the work opportunity tax credit passed last year and my proposed welfare-to-work tax credit. Our plan will also allow small businesses in distressed areas to deduct up to \$20,000 in additional expenses for certain equipment costs. Just as we are committed to seeing that self-government works as it should, we have a commitment from the District government to cooperate fully in the Economic Development Corporation.

This is important, but we need more. I challenge business and community leaders to give their unqualified support to bringing back the District. If you're a business or an association in the District, don't give up on it. I commend the members of the National Association of Homebuilders, who decided to keep their headquarters here, because that's important for a truly national organization, and it's important for a truly international organization as well. I thank MCI for its decision to keep their offices in the District.

If you're a business making money in the District, then invest here. Follow the lead of Ford Motor Company, which is providing a line of credit to repair emergency police, fire, and other vehicles. And Ford has set up an automotive program with three District schools.

I want to mention another example of good citizenship as well, and good business. Tomorrow Secretary Cuomo will be on hand as Safeway opens a large supermarket in Southeast DC. It sounds so basic to have access to a grocery store, but that area has not had one in 20 years. Safeway will create 200 new jobs. And we thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

I want to thank all the businesses who are here today for everything you do to support the District. I hope you will work with Direc-

tor Raines and Secretary Rubin to develop concrete ways to participate with the Economic Development Corporation and the District and report back to me within 60 days.

The Government will honor its commitment to the District. We know the Federal presence here is critical to the local economy. We know that we must do more, and that is why I have issued a directive to ensure that agencies do all they can to stay here and to contribute here. We want to build on our presence wherever possible. For example, the Navy will boost employment at the Southeast Navy Yard by doubling its current levels by 2001, adding 5,000 jobs here in the District.

As District residents, the First Lady, the Vice President, Tipper, and I will continue to do our part. Recently, the First Lady presented a check for \$18 million to repair our city schools coming from the Privatization of Connie Lee, the institution that insures college and university bonds. And our public-private partnership will now benefit District schoolchildren. The First Lady also challenged law firms—I thought that was good—we don't have any shortage of law firms in DC—[laughter]—to expand their efforts to adopt DC schools, to visit with students, to develop relationships with them and mentor them.

I'm proud of all the departments and agencies in the Federal Government that have adopted DC schools. And I would like to say a special word of thanks to my Secret Service detail who gave that to the First Lady and me as a Christmas present not very long ago. I couldn't imagine a better gift. And the work they do at the Kramer School is something that I am particularly proud of.

As the Vice President said, our administration has worked hard to be a good neighbor. But I've asked the Cabinet to do more. You will hear and see a lot of our Cabinet Secretaries in the District. You will see them doing things. In the next 2 weeks, for example, Secretary Albright and Ambassador Richardson will adopt local schools to teach children about diplomacy and geography. Secretary Glickman will announce a renewed effort to glean surplus food from cafeterias at Federal buildings to feed the hungry here

in the District. And I'm asking all the Secretaries to report back to me within 90 days with a targeted plan of action for each department to do all it possibly can to help the District.

It has been said that Americans didn't think much of their Capital until they had to defend it during attack in the War of 1812 when, as all of you know, in 1814 the White House was burned. In a way, history is repeating itself, because for too long, Americans have not thought enough about our Capital City. But Washington is still worth fighting for. In fact, it's more worth fighting for than ever.

The people I have seen who live in this city, who do miraculous things every day to try to help people make more of their own lives, to try to help kids in trouble, to try to turn things around and see people live up to their potential, deserve more than the rest of us have done. And I am determined that even though the solutions will not come overnight, we will provide our part of the effort. And together, with local government and business, with the involvement of every citizen, we can have a strategy and implement a strategy that makes Washington the city we all know it ought to be and that we must believe it will be.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Marion Barry of the District of Columbia; Andrew F. Brimmer, chairman, DC Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority (Control Board); and District of Columbia Ward 2 Councilman Jack Evans.

Executive Order 13038—Advisory Committee on the Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters

March 11, 1997

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.) (the "Act"), and in order to establish an advisory committee on the public

interest obligations of digital television broadcasters, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment. There is established the "Advisory Committee on the Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters" ("Committee"). The Committee shall consist of not more than 15 members appointed by the President. Members shall be chosen from the private sector, including members of the commercial and noncommercial broadcasting industry, computer industries, producers, academic institutions, public interest organizations, and the advertising community. The President shall designate a Chair from among the members of the Committee.

Sec. 2. Functions. On or before June 1, 1998, the Committee shall report to the Vice President on the public interest obligations digital television broadcasters should assume. For the purpose of carrying out its functions the Committee may, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, hold meetings at such times and places as the Committee may find advisable.

Sec. 3. Administration. (a) To the extent permitted by law, the heads of executive departments, agencies, and independent instrumentalities shall provide the Committee, upon request, with such information as it may require for the purpose of carrying out its functions.

(b) Upon request of the Chair of the Committee, the head of any executive department, agency, or instrumentality shall, to the extent permitted by law and subject to the discretion of such head, (1) make any of the facilities and services of such department, agency, or instrumentality available to the Committee; and (2) detail any of the personnel of such department, agency, or instrumentality to the Committee to assist the Committee in carrying out its duties.

(c) Members of the Committee shall serve without compensation for their work on the Committee. While engaged in the work of the Committee, members appointed from the private sector may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law and as the Chair, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and In-

formation, may allow as needed, for persons serving intermittently in the Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701–5707), to the extent funds are available for such purposes.

(d) To the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Department of Commerce shall provide the Committee with administrative services, staff, and other support services necessary for performance of the Committee's functions.

(e) The Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, or his designee, shall perform the functions of the President under the Act, except that of reporting to the Congress, in accordance with the guidelines and procedures established by the Administrator of General Services.

Sec. 4. General. The Committee shall terminate 30 days after submitting its report, unless extended by the President.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 11, 1997

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 12, 1997]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on March 13.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Byron Dorgan *March 11, 1997*

Thank you. I'm delighted to be on the stage with 40 percent of all the Democrats from North Dakota. [Laughter] You know, in 1974, it took three of them to lose the race for Congress; I did it at home all by myself. [Laughter] And I now know why they lost. The only person who should have been talking up here was Kim. [Laughter] And she hasn't said a word. I made her go out first tonight so I knew we'd get an applause instead of a boo. [Laughter]

I am delighted to be here. I am honored to be here with Senator Dorgan and Senator Conrad and Congressman Pomeroy. The three of them represent what I hope and believe, philosophically and in terms of their commitment to public service and the way they do their work, is not just the future of

our party but the future of our country, because they have repeatedly been willing to stand up and make tough decisions, some of which are popular with the electorate back home in North Dakota and may not be so popular with people here in Washington, some of which are not popular anywhere, but they just think they're right.

And I have a special feeling for Byron Dorgan. I followed his career long before he became a Senator, and I admired mightily what he did in North Dakota. Kent said he was voted the most powerful politician in North Dakota, and he said that he was sure that the person handling the revenues in Arkansas wasn't the most powerful person in the State. Actually, he was; I just had sense enough to make sure the folks didn't know that. [Laughter] I don't know how he got out of that box.

I really admire him. He deserves to be reelected. I'm glad you're here to help him. And I'd just like to remind you of a couple of things that often get lost in the hurly-burly of daily events around here. Thanks in no small measure to the leadership that he has exerted and the support that he has given, we reversed more than a decade of trickle-down, supply-side economics and replaced it with invest-and-grow economics. And by the narrowest of margin, thanks to his strong support and his vote, we reduced the deficit 63 percent, and this economy has produced 11½ million jobs for the first time ever in 4 years and the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation since the 1960's. That's enough to get him reelected. You deserve that.

In 1992, people talked about problems like crime and welfare as if they would always be with us in the same way that they were. But we have reversed; trends have declined—working with people all over this country—putting 100,000 police on the street; working with States to move people from welfare to work—2¼ million people. Now it will be 2½ million when we get the last total in 4 years, the largest number of people ever to move off the welfare rolls. And we have more to do. But that's something to be proud of. The crime rate going down every year—that's something to be proud of.

We have reasserted the importance of the family and our social policy, with the family and medical leave law, with special tax breaks for families with modest incomes, by raising the minimum wage, by passing the V-chip legislation, and taking on some of these other very tough issues. I think it's very important. That's the kind of pro-family policy that Senator Dorgan has fought for.

We have fought for free and for fair trade for America. We're the number one exporter in the world again. We had record exports for the last 4 years. We've reasserted the leadership role of our country in reducing the nuclear threat and taking advantage of the opportunities that are out there.

Now, we've got a lot left to do. We still have to balance the budget. People tell me all the time, "Well, can we keep this recovery going?" The answer is, we can if we do the right things but only if we do the right things. The American people are more than doing their part. They're willing to keep working. They're willing to keep starting small businesses, keep expanding businesses. They're dying to improve their education and skills and to become more productive. We have to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives. If we do it, we'll keep going forward.

That's what is at stake when Byron Dorgan presents himself to the people of North Dakota again. And no one should forget that on the major policy questions of the last 4 years, no matter how controversial, no matter how tight, no matter how tough, he stood up and cast the right vote. And this is a better, stronger country, and his State is better and stronger because of it. And he deserves to be rewarded for the leadership he's exercised and, most important, for the potential he has in the future for balancing the budget, for putting education first among our priorities, for doing the right thing to finish the work of welfare reform, for dealing with the problems that rural States have that are so easy to overlook here in Washington unless you have the kind of strong, clear voice that he has exhibited.

So you're doing a good thing being here for him tonight. And I'm glad to be here with him. I am honored to be his friend, honored to work with him every day. And I trust that

I will have the chance to do that until I am term-limited out and he goes on to his just reward. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. in the John Hay Room at the Hay-Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Dorgan's wife, Kim.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

March 11, 1997

Thank you. Please sit down. Thank you. First of all, I want to thank Roy Romer for his willingness to go back and forth across America, from here to Colorado and back several times every week to try to help us do what all of us need to do with our party. I thank in his absence Steve Grossman. We're all thinking about him and Barbara. Nothing hurts worse than cracking your elbow, I don't think, and we've got to be thinking about them. And I thank Alan Solomont for his work. And I thank all of you for your support.

I have just come from an event for Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota. It was a fascinating event. You know, North Dakota is a State that's so small, I felt like a sophisticate from Arkansas being there. [*Laughter*] And it's one of the few delegations that's completely Democratic, even though the State always votes Republican in Presidential elections. They have two Democratic Senators and a Democratic Congressman.

And the first time Byron Dorgan ran for Congress was in 1974, the first year I ran for public office. And Senator Conrad was his campaign manager, and Congressman Pomeroy was his driver. And I told him that it took all three of them to lose that race, and I lost mine all by myself. [*Laughter*] But it was a very interesting and heartening event, because I was thinking about Byron Dorgan and Kent and Earl, and I was thinking that if any of those three had either not been there or had not been willing to put their necks on the line, we would not have passed the budget in 1993. And we would have not reversed trickle-down economics, or in a less pejorative term, we would not have reversed supply-side economics.

And because we did, in an economic plan that invested in our children and our technology, in a fairer tax system for working people, 4½ years later—or 4 years later, we've got 11½ million jobs—the first time any administration, period, had produced that much—63 percent decline in the deficit; lowest rates of unemployment and inflation combined since the 1960's. That's what this party is about, and don't ever forget that. That's one big thing.

I'll tell you a little thing. Today I got a letter from a woman that I know from Iowa. I met her in Cedar Rapids in 1992. She was offering to defend me from the attacks that we're only interested in people like you. And she reminded me of this story of how I met her. I met her in a rally in 1992, and she was holding a child of another race in her hands. I said, "Where did you get that baby?" She said, "This baby is my baby." I said, "Well, where did you get it?" She said, "In Miami." I said, "Where in the world—how did you get a baby from Miami; you're from Iowa?" She said, "Well, nobody else wanted this baby. This baby has got AIDS."

And later in the campaign, my staff actually went out of their way to try to help this lady in a difficult situation. She adopted a child when she had been left by her husband. She was raising two children on her own, her own children. She had barely enough money to put body and soul together. And she was at a political rally because she thought it was important for her future. And she has struggled to keep that little baby alive for 4 years. And that child is coming up to the National Institute of Health now, because a lot of the things that are now keeping adults with AIDS alive for very long periods of time, they're not quite sure how to do that with children.

So she wrote me a letter because, she said, "You've always welcomed us. You've always tried to help us, and we'd like to come by and see you." And I love this little kid, and I've kept up with her all these years. And I thought to myself, that is also what this administration and what this party is about, giving people like that little girl a chance to live the fullest life she can, recognizing the dignity of people like that woman, who took what only you could characterize as a truly heroic stand to do something most of us in

far more comfortable circumstances have never done. And all those things in the middle, that is really what this is all about. And we can never forget that what we do affects real people in real lives.

So when we replaced trickle-down economics with invest-and-grow economics, we gave Americans a chance to have a better future. When we got away from hot rhetoric and got down to concrete action on social problems and we reversed the social decline, working with people all over America to get the crime rate down and the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history, we helped to give people a better future.

When we restored family, not just in rhetoric but, in fact, at the center of our social concerns, with things like the Family and Medical Leave Act and the V-chip and the television ratings and the regulations to protect children from tobacco and the earned-income tax credit, those things changed people's lives.

When we reaffirmed the leadership of the United States for peace and freedom in the world and reduced the nuclear threat, that makes our future better. That's what I'm going to try to do when I go to meet with President Yeltsin next week in Helsinki. What can we keep doing to reduce the nuclear threat? What can we do to build a Europe that's united and free, so in the 21st century we don't have the hundreds of thousands, indeed, the millions of young Americans going over to Europe and risking losing their lives, as happened in World War I and World War II. This is about big things. And I want you to think about that.

And Roy talks about 1995 and '96—we had—I found that experience sometimes exhausting, but ultimately exhilarating, because we were fighting about real things, and the American people had to make a decision, huge, big differences in how we should move into the future: What is the role of Government in our lives? And I think the election pretty much resolved that.

And we decided we would no longer try to have our daily bread by demonizing our Government in a democratic, free society. I can say that this administration has done more to reduce the size of Government and the number of regulations and the burden

of it than our Republican predecessors, but we never could figure out how to use the rhetoric to convince the American people that the Government that they elected and paid for was their enemy inherently. And I think what we see now is that people want it to work better, and they want it to be effective.

Today I had the privilege of appearing with Walter Cronkite and Paul Taylor, who spearheaded the coalition last year to try to get the networks to give free television time to the candidates for President as the opening salvo of what they hope will be a broad campaign finance reform effort that will actually open up the airwaves to all qualified candidates. And I said to them that I felt very strongly that now that we were switching from—we were switching to digital channeling, which will give the networks far more options to communicate with people, that we ought to require as a part of the public interest more free TV time.

And at least one executive, Barry Diller, has challenged his colleagues to do that. And it sounds like a lot of money—let's say we just equal what is about spent on television that's funded now, about \$55 million in the off-years; let's say \$400 million in election years—that's still less than 2 percent of the total revenues of these operations.

And when you get a monopoly on the airwaves, I think you ought to act in the public interest. All of us know that we cannot—those of us who've followed the campaign laws—under the decisions of the Supreme Court, the only way we can ever control the aggregate spending in political campaigns is to offer something to those who voluntarily observe the limits. And the only thing that's worth it is access to the voters in a free and unfettered way, principally through television. So we were talking about that today. That's something that's important to do.

There are a lot of other things that we have to do here. We've got to balance the budget. We've got to pass the education reform proposals that I have recommended, both to raise standards and to open college. We've got to take more seriously this juvenile justice issue. Even with the crime rates dropping dramatically, juvenile crime rates are too

high almost everywhere. But we know we can do something about it.

I was in Boston the other day; I spent a day in Boston. There has not been a single child killed in Boston in a year and a half, not one, zero, because—and it is not an accident—because of all the things that they have done there that we have now put into a bill and tried to give the tools to the rest of the country to do, which is exactly what we did with the crime bill.

So we have all these things out there to do, and that's what you're fighting for. But I want you to be proud of the fact that this country is in much better shape than it was 4 years ago because of specific changes that were made as a direct result of the efforts made not only by the President and the Vice President but by the people who supported us in the Congress and throughout the country. This country is better because of that, and I thank you for that.

And I ask you for your support for all the things we're trying to do now. Stay with us. We have so much more to do. This is—as I said, this is not a time, just because things are going well, that the country can afford to relax. We have to finish the job of balancing the budget, if you want the economy to continue to grow. We have to finish the job of raising educational standards and opening opportunity, if you want everybody to participate in economic growth. And ultimately, our economic growth will be retarded unless we dramatically improve the education of our people. Because of the job mix, the good new jobs we're creating, virtually all of them now, require something more than high school.

If you expect everybody to be treated fairly in this society, we have got to find a way to give jobs to those people on welfare. We've told them they've got to go to work. Who are we to say that unless they have work that they can go to every day?

So there's a lot out there. And I am proud—let me say again, I am proud of what Governor Romer and Steve Grossman have done in putting the Democratic Party four-square on the side of passing campaign finance reform this year. And I hope that some of the decisions that are being taken now in the Senate will help us to do that.

But I want all the Democrats to stay out there for that. We need to be on the side of positive change. We have rescued—I believe we have rescued the debate from a sterile, meaningless debate over whether Government is the problem or Government is the savior. We know it is neither now. What we now have to do is to create a Government for the 21st century that will command the support of the American people and do the job that needs to be done to give people the tools to make the most of their own lives.

That's what we're going to do for 4 more years, thanks to you. And I want you to be happy about it, proud of it, and determined to continue to do it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. at the Sheraton Carlton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, DNC general chair; Steve Grossman, DNC national chair, and his wife, Barbara; and Alan Solomont, DNC national finance chair.

Executive Order 13039—Exclusion of the Naval Special Warfare Development Group From the Federal Labor-Management Relations Program

March 11, 1997

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 7103(b)(1) of title 5 of the United States Code, and having determined that the Naval Special Warfare Development Group has as a primary function intelligence, counter-intelligence, investigative, or national security work and that the provisions of Chapter 71 of title 5 of the United States Code cannot be applied to this organization in a manner consistent with national security requirements and considerations, Executive Order 12171 of November 19, 1979, as amended, is further amended by adding the following at the end of section 1-205:

“(i) Naval Special Warfare Development Group.”

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 11, 1997.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 13, 1997]

NOTE: This Executive order was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 12, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on March 14.

Remarks Announcing the Proposed “National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act”

March 12, 1997

Thank you very much. Secretary Slater, Mr. Vice President, members of the administration, the Department of Transportation. Senator Moynihan, thank you for being here. Mayor Schwartz, thank you for being here.

I spent a lot of time in the last few years talking about the need to build a bridge to the 21st century. And usually I'm talking in metaphorical terms that involve—[laughter]—balancing the budget, improving education for our children, preserving the environment as we grow the economy. Today we're talking about building bridges and roads and transit systems and highways in more literal terms. But I think it's important also to point out that as we invest in these bridges and roads and transit systems, we are also building a bridge to a cleaner environment. We're building a bridge from welfare to work. We're building a bridge to sustainable communities that can last and grow and bring people together over the long run.

And that is the importance of the legislation that we submit to Congress today. It does the old-fashioned work of investing in America's infrastructure in a very important way, but it also ties those investments to the challenges we face today and tomorrow.

I am proud that even as we have moved toward a balanced budget and cut our deficit by 63 percent in the last 4 years, we have still increased our Federal investment in

transportation infrastructure, and I thank the Members of Congress who have supported that. [Applause] I feel compelled to disclose that I did not plant the person in the middle of the audience over here who started the applause. [Laughter] But if he's a Federal employee, he will immediately get a raise. [Laughter]

Compared to 4 years ago, our highways and bridges are stronger, 100 miles of new transit lines are under construction, and that is just part of the story. But it is a big part of why our economy has produced almost 12 million jobs in the last 4 years and one month, including over one million new jobs in construction.

Today we're taking the next big step to maintain and modernize our transportation system and to make sure it is the best in the world. The "National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act," as Secretary Slater said, known as NEXTEA, authorizes \$174 billion over the next 6 years to improve our bridges, highways, and transit systems. It will create tens of thousands of jobs for our people, help move people from welfare to work, protect our air and water, and improve our highway safety.

I'm especially proud that as we build our infrastructure, we are going to help build better lives for people who are moving off welfare. One of the biggest barriers facing people who move from welfare to work is finding transportation to get to their jobs, their training programs, their children's day care center.

There was recently a study of Atlanta, Georgia, employment and the community surrounding Atlanta, pointing out that in entry-level jobs, an overwhelming percentage of those jobs—for example, in fast food restaurants—were held full time by inner-city adults who were low income people, if they were in Atlanta. If they were in the surrounding communities, it was just a little over 50 percent. Why? Because the people who wanted the full-time jobs had no way to get there. And you see that repeated over and over and over throughout the country.

This bill provides \$600 million over 6 years to help provide and pay for transportation, so that those who have been told by the Congress in the last session that they have to go

to work are, in fact, able to reach the jobs that are out there. And I ask for the support of everyone for that.

For too long, too many people have believed that strong transportation and a clean environment could not go hand in hand. This bill proves that that is not true. NEXTEA provides more than \$1.3 billion a year to reduce air pollution and millions more to preserve wetlands and open space. By helping communities to invest in cleaner methods of transportation, by supporting recreational trails, bike paths, and pedestrian walkways, by investing in scenic byways and landscaping, this bill strengthens our infrastructure while protecting and enhancing our precious natural resources. Make no mistake about it, this is one of the most important pieces of environmental legislation that will be considered by the Congress in the next 2 years. And I think it should be thought of in that way.

This legislation also builds on our progress in making roads safer, increasing highway traffic safety funds by 25 percent, expanding our aggressive campaign to crack down on drunk and drugged driving.

At its heart, therefore, as you can see and as Secretary Slater said, this bill is about more than our roads and our bridges. It's about cutting-edge jobs in commerce. It's about the infrastructure we need to prepare for them. It's about the responsibility of those moving from welfare to work and our responsibility to help them get there. It's about the community we share and the steps we have to take to make it both safer and cleaner for our children.

The chance to reshape America's infrastructure comes along only once every 6 years. That means that this transportation bill literally will be our bridge into the 21st century. That's why we must work together to pass this legislation, to build on a long bipartisan position of cooperation in transportation policy to move our Nation forward. Together we can keep our economy on the right track and ensure that the track itself is strong enough for the enormous challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

I am excited about this legislation. I applaud all the people in the Department who put it together, and I'm very much looking

forward to working with the Congress to make it a reality.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Oklahoma City Councilman Mark Schwartz, president, National League of Cities.

Remarks in ABC's "Straight Talk on Drugs" Radio Town Meeting

March 12, 1997

[Peter Jennings, ABC News, opened the program and introduced the President.]

The President. Good morning, Peter.

Mr. Jennings. Thank you for being with us, sir. The President has already had a chance to talk to the kids here just a little bit. Tell the folks at home why you think it's important for them and you to be here together.

The President. I think it's important because we know that while overall drug use in America is still going down, drug use among people under 18 is, in fact, going up. And that's a very troubling thing because all of you represent our future. And I'm concerned about what happens to you as individuals, and I'm concerned about what happens to your communities and what happens to our country.

And ABC has been good enough not only to do this little townhall meeting for us but also to run a public service campaign with ads telling our young people and telling their parents and their friends and their mentors that, in effect, we have to talk about this, that silence about this problem is like accepting it. And I think that we all owe ABC a debt of gratitude for good citizenship here, and I appreciate what they're trying to do. We're here because the number one goal of our antidrug strategy is to persuade young people to stay away from drugs in the first place.

And I just want to thank especially our Olympian, Dominique Dawes, who is here with us today, who has agreed to be the spokesperson for our Girl Power campaign. And she's taped a lot of public service radio ads telling young girls to go for the gold, to

stay off drugs, to make the most of their own lives. And that's why we're here, and I'm glad we are. I'm glad you're here, too, Dominique.

[At this point, Olympic gymnast Dominique Dawes thanked the President and said that young people should stay busy and stay off drugs. Mr. Jennings then introduced Mickisha Bonner of Garnet-Patterson Middle School in Washington, DC, who described a drug market across the street from her school.]

The President. Well, Mickisha, are these drug sellers in the same place every day?

Participant. The same place every day.

The President. And how long have they been there?

Participant. Since I've been going to school there.

The President. And have the school officials asked the police to move them—

Participant. Yes.

The President. —get rid of them, to arrest them? Have they ever been arrested?

Participant. I don't really know. I just see them every day.

The President. I'll see what I can do about that.

Mr. Jennings. Talk to the President after the—he's very good, I've seen him do this before.

The President. I'll see what I can do about that. That's not right.

Mr. Jennings. But even though this is radio, I want to try a show of hands. How many of you have seen drugs being traded—

The President. Or sold.

Mr. Jennings. —or sold around your school? We've got maybe 30 kids with us here, for those of you at home, and we've had more than a dozen kids go up.

There are, by the way, so many drugs for kids to abuse, it's almost mind boggling at times. But again for you at home, to get some sense of what we're talking about here, here briefly is ABC's Jim Hickey to tell us what is available for kids to abuse.

[Following a report by Mr. Hickey on effects of various drugs, Mr. Jennings introduced Brandon Power, of Woburn, MA, who had nearly died of a muscle relaxant drug over-

dose in February. Brandon explained that an acquaintance had offered him prescription pills taken from a neighbor's mail.]

The President. Well, let me ask you this. Did you know they were muscle relaxants when you took them?

Participant. Nobody really knew exactly what they were, but not like anything big.

The President. Was there one person who had them all who then gave them to the rest of you?

Participant. Yes, there was one girl that had a bottle of them.

Mr. Jennings. Under some pressure, do you think, because the other kids were taking them?

Participant. I don't think it was really pressure, but in some cases—I can't speak for everyone, but there were other groups of kids that, like, I'm not totally friends with that may have felt pressure. But I didn't at all.

The President. Do you believe that in this case that if people had understood how dangerous they were, that they wouldn't have done it?

Participant. I don't really know, but I think that if they had found out about what would have happened and how they could have died and how close they came, they wouldn't have taken them.

The President. This is big problem for us. This is why it's so important that people talk about this and that we educate children at a very young age about what they can do, because it's not a bad thing to have legal drugs being shipped through the mail. It helps a lot of senior citizens, for example, who are not mobile, who have a hard time getting around. If they have a legal prescription and they can get it through the mail, that's a good thing. It makes their lives easier and better.

Inhalants—virtually everything people inhale is legal and performs some sort of function in our society. And I think what you're saying, it's kind of another important piece of evidence for me that we need to have more conversations just like this in every home in America, in every school in America. We need to talk about it, because those muscle relaxants are—if you think about it, I don't know if you've ever had a muscle

spasm, but I have. If you ever had a muscle spasm, it takes something pretty powerful to unlock that muscle. And so if you—even someone as big as I am, you can't take more than a couple of those pills within a period of time without having an adverse reaction.

[Brandon asked about improving mail security.]

The President. Well, I don't know what we could do about that because she probably took it out of the neighbor's mailbox. And so, once that happens, I don't know what we could have done. There may be something that can be done to label them more clearly.

Now, we do have—the Postal Service is on the alert for illegal drugs being shipped in the mail. That also sometimes happens. But when you've got a legal prescription drug, about all I can think of you could do is maybe have the post office try to deliver it to the door. Maybe that's one thing you could do, and maybe not leave it in the mailbox. And I'll talk to them about it and see if there's anything else we can do.

[Another participant suggested special deliveries for prescription drugs as a means to prevent thefts.]

The President. I think that's a good idea.

[At this point, the network took a commercial break. When the show resumed, a participant commented that Brandon should not have taken pills, even from a friend, if he didn't know what they were.]

The President. I was just wondering—I see someone has got a comment back there, but I was wondering—this raises a question about what obligations young people have to each other, because no matter how—let's assume that we can fix this mail problem and say, okay, you'll have certain dangerous drugs, or potentially dangerous, and they'll only be delivered direct to people. There will always be some opportunity. You can't get all the inhalants off the market because they're legal. What obligations do you all have to each other? If you have a friend you know is doing drugs, what do you do about that? What are your obligations to each other?

[A participant responded that as a recovering drug abuser, he would preach to friends about the negative aspects of drug use. Another participant said she would point out the health risks involved. Another commented that some kids use drugs to be cool and to get attention.]

The President. Do people believe it's dangerous? You had your hand up back there.

[A participant said that a friend's obligation would be greater when harm to other people, rather than only to the user, was a possibility. Another participant indicated that it was hard to avoid drug use when others thought you weren't cool.]

The President. What about these guys? Michael, what were you going to say?

[A participant noted that marijuana had become so accepted that the users had more arguments for drug use than he had arguments against them.]

The President. You said—this is very important because the biggest increase in drug use among children under 18 by far has been marijuana. You believe it's because they simply don't believe it's dangerous or they don't believe it will hurt them?

[The participant said that kids don't believe it is dangerous, especially in light of the California law allowing medicinal use, and that they think medicines won't harm them.]

The President. Well, Brandon can prove that's not true.

Participant. Exactly.

[A participant from Los Angeles discussed the drug problem there, saying that he was a former gang member and drug user, and that the counseling he received after being arrested had helped him to see a broader world beyond his immediate surroundings.]

The President. Had anybody tried to talk you out of using drugs in the first place, before you did? At home, at school?

[The participant said that his parents were drug abusers and he first accepted it but later viewed it as part of a bad environment. Participant Matthew Migliore then described his alcohol overdose at the age of 10, saying that

a variety of drugs were available and that he had seen antidrug public service announcements but just never believed them.]

The President. So how can we be more effective about this? Let me just give you one example, because you talked about this. We know a lot about marijuana, for example, we didn't know 20 or 30 years ago. We now know that it is roughly 3 times as toxic as it used to be, number one, and number two, that it does have bad health effects on your heart, your lungs, and your brain. And specifically, for young people—this is very important for young people—sustained use of it makes it more difficult for people to concentrate, to learn, and to retain. It has a—we know this now.

So how can we—you may be right, Matt, maybe we've overdone it. But what can we do to communicate it in a way that's effective?

[At this point, the network took a commercial break. Following the break, a participant discussed the importance of parents talking to their children about drugs. Another participant said that having positive role models would help children avoid using drugs.]

The President. And tell me—give me an example.

Participant. Well, I don't have any examples because I don't do drugs. But a lot of my friends do, and they do a lot of pot. And they have—that's the most—the worst thing they've done. But they don't have anyone to look up to.

The President. So like somebody in the Big Brother/Big Sister program.

Participant. Yes, or a mentor.

The President. Or a mentor of some other kind.

[A participant stated that teens who don't use drugs can be good role models for their peers]

Mr. Jennings. Mr. President, we were all talking with Chelsea before you got here. She recently turned 17. When did you start talking to her about drugs, and what did you talk to her about?

The President. Well, I think probably when she was probably 7 years old, 6 or 7, something like that, very young. And then she had—she went through the D.A.R.E.

program at her school—which is one thing I think Philip mentioned—the D.A.R.E. officer. She loved her D.A.R.E. officer. He had a profound effect on the young people.

But we began when she was very, very young, talking to her, basically saying that this is wrong. This can cause you great damage. It can wreck your life. It can steal things from you. It costs money. It costs you your ability to think. It costs your self-control. It costs you your freedom in the end. So we talked to her about it quite a lot when she was very young.

Mr. Jennings. A lot of people at home know we have a baby boomer President, and a lot of people in the baby boomer generation are nervous, apprehensive; some even think it's hypocritical to talk to their kids because of their own experience. What did you tell her about yours?

The President. Well, I basically told her what I've told everybody in America, which is when I was 22 years old in England and I thought there were no consequences, I tried marijuana a couple of times. But if I had known then what I know now about it, I would not have done it. And I think that—I feel the same way Dan does. I think that if you have done something that you're not especially proud of, but that you know more about it, you have almost a bigger obligation to try to prevent other people from getting in trouble.

I think this business about how the baby boomers all feel too guilt-ridden to talk to their kids is the biggest load of hokey I ever heard. They have a bigger responsibility to talk to their children. Most of us did not—most of us—first of all, most of us were much older when the experimentation started. And secondly, we did not know what we know now. We have no excuse. We have a greater responsibility, not a smaller one. So it hasn't bothered me to tell her that she shouldn't make the same mistakes I did.

I think all parents, by the way, hope their children won't make the same mistakes they did in many areas of life, not just this. And so that's part of what being a parent is all about.

[A participant described his experience with inhalants, explaining how easily they could be obtained and the adverse effects of using

them. Mr. Jennings asked why he had started, and the participant responded that his troubled homelife contributed to his drug use. He then explained that he sought help at Manor Mountain Treatment Center in Baltimore, but after his release, he started using crack and returned to the center.]

The President. Do you think that you can have an impact on other people because of what you've been through?

Participant. Yes.

The President. Can you talk to other people and get through to them in a way that someone else couldn't because of what you've been through?

[The participant replied that he hoped to help at least one person learn from his experiences with drugs. Another participant described his continuing battle with crack addiction. The next participant said he thought drugs were destroying the country and asked the President if the U.S. could institute effective sanctions against drug producing countries.]

The President. Well, let me tell you a little about that. Let me just talk for a couple minutes.

First of all, I agree with that. We require countries where drugs are grown to cooperate with us in trying to destroy them and arrest the people who are selling them, if they want to keep getting any kind of aid or any help with trade from us. And I think that's a good thing.

But let me tell you what they say. I'll tell you what they say back. They say, "Okay, we have a poor little country here, and I'm a little farmer. And I can grow cocoa to make cocaine, or I can grow bananas and pineapples and I'll go broke if I do that and I'll make money if I do the other thing." The police officers in these poor countries where the drugs are shipped through—last year we know there was something like \$500 million spent in Mexico alone to make payments to police officers that like tripled or quadrupled their annual salary. And so these countries that try to help us that are poor, where the drugs are grown, they say, "If the Americans didn't buy—the American people have 5 percent of the world's population and buy 50 percent of the world's drugs. And if they didn't want the drugs and weren't willing to

pay these outrageous prices for them, we wouldn't have a market, and we'd have to go do something else for a living."

In other words, I think you're right. We have to be tougher on them. And last year we had record numbers of destruction of drugs in foreign countries and arrests and all that. But as long as there is as much money as there is, and as long as Americans are just dying to have it, it's going to be impossible to completely eradicate. And we need to do more.

But all of us have to take responsibility, too. If we didn't have a drug problem in this country, they would go broke, and they would go do something else. Now, I'm not saying we shouldn't do more in other countries, but we have to take a lot of responsibility here, too.

Mr. Jennings. A show of hands—radio, again—a show of hands from the kids only, is he convincing? Well, you didn't do too badly. Okay, so we'll continue in a just moment.

The President. It's better than I did in the election. That's great. [Laughter]

[At this point, the network took a commercial break. Following the break, Mr. Jennings asked what role the media played in educating children about the dangers of drugs. A participant said that the media does influence kids and suggested that the President support an increase in antidrug public service announcements.]

The President. More of the antidrug commercials?

Participant. Antidrug commercials.

Mr. Jennings. But now somebody said earlier—

The President. What about what Matt said—

Mr. Jennings. —there were too many of them.

The President. —that if you overdo it, people won't believe it? What's the answer to that—Matt?

Participant. A lot of kids are—they don't believe it—you know, it's just not the right message.

The President. So what is the right message?

Go ahead.

[Several participants explained how television programming sent mixed messages on drug use and gave examples from daytime programming and situation comedies where drug use was treated lightly. Other participants indicated that their friends were not influenced by public service announcements. Mr. Jennings then invited the President to speak for the remaining 2 minutes of the program.]

The President. Well, I'm going to give you back the 2 minutes. I'm going to give you 2 minutes to tell me anything specific you think I could do to help more kids stay off drugs.

Mr. Jennings. Okay. You're going to have to make it very quick.

The President. Very quick, though. Real quick. One line, everybody.

Participant. What you need to do is make more mentorship programs, more after-school programs where a kid could keep himself busy right after school.

Participant. There should be more treatment centers and more education.

Participant. People who are in jail should have more learning while they're in jail and not just getting out and learning more while they're in the system.

Participant. You should have more police officers out on the street, make sure nobody is selling drugs.

Participant. I think you need more of a firsthand look from people who have experience with this problem to— That's it.

Participant. I think you should cut back on the cartooning commercials and make there be more live-action commercials that get to the point about drugs.

The President. Give evidence.

Participant. More education programs for kids and younger kids about the harmful effects.

Participant. Well, I think that the cartoons they really don't believe because it's just—if they do it then they think it's cool anyway.

Participant. I also think that you should open up more after-school programs where kids have sports to do after school, keep them active.

Participant. I think the parents need to get really, really involved with their kids, not

matter how many times their kids try to make them stay away from them.

Mr. Jennings. Boy, don't you wish you could get such fast, cogent advice from your Cabinet members? [*Laughter*]

The President. It's great, and I think—first of all, I agree with the after-school arguments, the mentoring arguments, the treatment—all the things you have said. But I think it's a good thing that we ended with Ally, because we know that children that have parents who work with them and deal with this issue are much less likely to be in trouble.

NOTE: The town meeting began at 11:06 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Federico Peña as Secretary of Energy

March 12, 1997

I want to applaud the Senate today for its strong vote of support for Federico Peña to serve as our Nation's new Energy Secretary. As Transportation Secretary, Federico Peña built consensus among communities, business, and government and streamlined operations to reap benefits for all taxpayers.

With this record, I am confident that Secretary Peña has the skill, experience, and dedication to lead the Energy Department to meet its central challenges—to broaden America's energy resources, to promote a safer, more secure world, and to help to create a brighter economic future for all Americans.

Remarks on Departure for Raleigh, North Carolina, and an Exchange With Reporters

March 13, 1997

Attack on Israeli Schoolchildren

The President. Today along the normally peaceful border between Israel and Jordan, we have seen an inexcusable and tragic act of violence against schoolchildren. I condemn this act in the strongest possible terms. I offer to Prime Minister Netanyahu, the Israeli people, and the families and friends of

the innocent children who died or were wounded my profound condolences and those of the American people.

As I travel to North Carolina today to speak to people about our own schoolchildren, the senseless denial of a future for these young Israeli children will bear heavily on my mind. There is no justification or excuse for these acts. Now the leaders in the region must work hard to calm the situation, to do everything in their power to create an atmosphere in which violence is rejected rather than embraced.

I call on the leaders and the people of the region to reject violence, to redouble their efforts toward peace and reconciliation. I was encouraged by the statement which King Hussein issued not long ago—just a few moments ago—and I am very hopeful that the leaders and the people will respond in an appropriate manner.

Thank you.

Jerusalem Settlements

Q. Mr. President, do you believe the Israelis have to halt the settlements in East Jerusalem at this point? Do you think that might help calm the situation there?

The President. Let me first say that there is no evidence at this moment that this terrible incident is related to the tensions in the area over the issues. For all we know, this may have been just a deranged person. And I think it is important, given King Hussein and Jordan's long record of reaching for peace and reconciliation, that no one jump to any undue conclusions.

We don't have the facts. None of us have any facts other than we know this incident occurred. But we have no reason to believe that this was politically motivated by any larger group or anything. We just don't know that.

But you know what I believe. I believe that this is a time when we need to be building confidence and working together and there needs to be a certain mutuality of action in the Middle East to get this peace process well underway. That is what I had hoped would happen after the Hebron agreement, and that is still what I believe has to happen if we're going to succeed.

So we'll be talking to all the parties, and I'm in more or less constant contact with them. And we'll continue to be hopeful. But for right now, I think we need to give the people of Israel the time to absorb this terrible shock.

Thank you.

Q. Have you had a chance to talk to King Hussein?

The President. No.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:36 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel and King Hussein I of Jordan.

Remarks to a Joint Session of the North Carolina State Legislature in Raleigh

March 13, 1997

Thank you very much. Lieutenant Governor Wicker, Speaker Brubaker, Senator Basnight, the other State elected officials who are here; my good friend Governor Hunt; Mayor Fetzer. I'd like to thank those who came down here with me today. I brought some of the Members of your congressional delegation home. They don't need to hear this speech, they've heard it before, but I was glad to have them here in moral support: Congressman David Price; Congressman Bob Etheridge, your former superintendent of education; Congressman Mike McIntyre; and Congresswoman Eva Clayton. I thank them for coming.

I also want to say I'm glad to be joined today by your neighbor, the Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, former Governor of South Carolina, and by our new Secretary of Defense, Bill Cohen of Maine. We're glad to have him with us today, too. Thank you, Secretary Cohen, for coming.

I was glad that you mentioned my Chief of Staff, Erskine Bowles. He wouldn't come here with me today because he was afraid all of you would think that he was shirking his duties and not at work. But let me tell you, he is doing a magnificent job. I'm very proud of him. I couldn't believe it when he agreed to come back to Washington and take this job, especially because I knew it would cost him a small fortune. And he reminded

me that his father used to tell him, "Once you have the tools, you've got to spend some time to add to the woodpile." So he's up in Washington adding back to the woodpile. And you should all be very proud of him. He is a remarkable man. He's doing a good job.

I'd also like to thank the other North Carolinians on my staff. Two of the three of them are here today. Doug Sosnik, my former political director and senior counselor, is not here, but my Director of Communications, Don Baer, is here, and Charles Duncan, the Associate Director of Presidential Personnel. They both came home with me, and they were glad to have the excuse to come home. And I appreciate their being here and their service.

I was told that this was the first time a sitting President has addressed the North Carolina State Legislature. If it's not true, don't disabuse me now, because I'm about to say something good. *[Laughter]* And I am very honored to be here. Even more important, I've spent a little time here over the years, and I am honored and mildly surprised that you are here, because it's tournament time and you've got four teams, as usual, in the tournament.

You may know that I am something of a basketball fanatic. And you may know that one of my most memorable basketball experiences—I once saw North Carolina and Kentucky play in the Dean Dome, and the car that I came in was towed. *[Laughter]* But I had so much fun at the ballgame, I would have walked all the way back to Arkansas after it was over. *[Laughter]* I make it a point never to take sides in basketball games unless my home team in Arkansas or my alma mater, Georgetown, are playing. But I am looking forward to the day when the great Dean Smith breaks Adolph Rupp's record.

There is much for the rest of the Nation, and especially the rest of the South, to admire in North Carolina, the determined and visionary leadership that has characterized this State for many decades in education and economic development, in bringing harmony among peoples of different backgrounds.

When I was a young man, I followed the work here of then-Governor Terry Sanford, who later became my friend and colleague.

Eighteen years ago, when I first started my career as Governor of Arkansas, my best mentor and friend was Jim Hunt. And he is still my mentor and friend. Dick Riley and I were laughing with Jim Hunt—we were together 18 years ago as the Governors of Arkansas, South Carolina, and North Carolina, and we were laughing that Jim was probably the only one of us who could still get elected Governor in our home States after 18 years. [Laughter] And I applaud him on that.

It was in Chapel Hill that the cornerstone was laid at our Nation's first publicly funded university, in Kitty Hawk where man first took to the skies. And today, North Carolina is an aeronautics and an air travel hub center for millions of people. Your State universities receive the highest level of funding for research and development in the Nation. You have connected more of your communities than any other State in the country to the information superhighway, something I'm trying to do for every classroom and library in America by the year 2000. The Research Triangle has one of the highest per capita concentrations of Ph.D.'s in the world, and you are clearly one of America's most dynamic centers of economic activity.

The most important thing about all this is not for me to brag on you, you know that already, but to emphasize the main point: These things do not happen by accident. They are the product of vision and disciplined, long-term effort.

Now our country faces the challenges of a new century, a whole new economy, a whole new way in which people will work and live and relate to each other here at home and around the world. It is driven by information and by technology. Its best hopes may be undermined by its darkest fears, by the old demons of racial and religious and ethnic hatreds, by terrorism and narcotrafficking and organized crime.

This new time that we're moving into, that coincidentally will be part of a new century and a new millennium, will give more people in this State and this Nation the chance to live out their dreams than at any period in human history, if we take advantage of it to seize our opportunities and deal with our challenges.

There is unprecedented peace and prosperity now, and it has been very rare in our country's history. You can go back and find maybe a couple of other examples when we've had real security, a feeling of prosperity, and yet, a whole lot of challenges before us. Usually when people feel secure and relatively prosperous, one of two things happens—neither of them very laudable, but it's part of human nature—we either get sort of happy and self-satisfied and don't do anything, or because we are not gripped by big differences, we fall out with each other over small things, and petty things make us less than we ought to be.

The point I want to take today is that we cannot afford either to be complacent or to be divided among ourselves about small things. For we have been given an opportunity almost unique in American history to fashion a future that will embrace everybody. And we cannot and dare not blow that opportunity.

If you look at where we are now, you can see the vistas of the future. Our economy produced 12 million jobs in 4 years—never happened before in a 4-year period. We've had constant decline in crimes. We've had the biggest drop in the welfare rolls in American history in the last 4 years. In North Carolina, you've seen the unemployment rate drop to 4.2 percent, 75,000 people off the welfare rolls, 350,000 new jobs. That's going on all over America. But you know that we have more to do.

I have been going around the country, to the Michigan and the Maryland State legislatures—today the Vice President is in California speaking to the State legislature as I am here with you—because I know that to achieve the vision that we share for America, we all have to do our part. I've said many times that the era of big Government is over. Your Federal Government is now 285,000 people smaller than it was the day I took office. It's the smallest it's been since President Kennedy was in office, in real terms. As a percentage of the civilian work force, the Federal Government is now as small as it was when Franklin Roosevelt was sworn into office the first time, before the New Deal.

But the challenges we face are still very big, indeed. If they cannot be solved by gov-

ernment alone, and especially by the Federal Government, obviously, a new partnership is required. And new efforts, new activity, new responsibility is required of people at the State level, at the local level, and in their private lives. The biggest challenge we face today, I believe, is the challenge of creating a world-class education system that embraces every child that lives in this State and in this Nation. And this must not be a political football.

In the cold war, because we knew that communism threatened our existence, it became commonplace that politics would stop at the water's edge, and the Democrats and the Republicans would fight like cats and dogs over whatever it was they were fighting about, but when it came to standing up to the threat of communism, we were together. If the President of one party went abroad on a mission of world peace, he was never criticized back home by members of the other party because politics stopped at the water's edge. I think we understand today, intuitively, that education holds the key to our future in the 21st century. And I believe politics must stop at the schoolhouse door.

When I was Governor, a long time ago now, North Carolina already had the highest percentage of its adults in institutions of higher education of any State in the South. The economy was growing, and it was diversifying, and yet you still had more success in maintaining manufacturing jobs than any State in our region and, indeed, in the country. You know all this. Last year you had the biggest increase in eighth grade math scores, I noticed, in the country. I was in Michigan, and I said that they had the second biggest increase in math scores, and the minute I got in the car, Governor Hunt made sure I knew who was number one. [*Laughter*] So I knew that.

The Governor chose to be sworn in at the Needham Laughton High School, his old school, to make clear that school standards and teaching excellence will be his top priorities. But with all the progress that we have made, you know we've got a lot more to do.

Between 1992 and the year 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created in this economy will require more than a high school level of literacy and math skills—89 percent.

Today, even though over 80 percent of our children are graduating from high school, more than half—or about half the people entering the work force are not prepared with these skills. We all know that is true.

For 20 years, inequality among working Americans grew. In the last few years it started to shrink—in the last couple of years—as we've gotten—more and more of our new jobs are becoming higher wage jobs and as growth and productivity are permitting wages to rise again.

Many people, just a couple of years ago, were saying, "Well, is the middle class vanishing in America? Will it always be squeezed? Are we going to create a country with a huge number of people that are very well off and an even much larger number of people that are poor, with a smaller middle class?" We've seen in the last few years that that does not have to happen. We can begin to grow the middle class again with productivity and growth and the right kinds of new jobs, but we have to be able to provide the people with the skills to hold those jobs, if we're going to maintain a high-wage, high-growth, high-opportunity society in America in the 21st century. And our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply cannot do that.

That is why our number one priority has to be to make America's education the best in the world. We have to have a nation in which every 8-year-old can read independently, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go on to college, and every adult American can keep on learning throughout an entire lifetime.

In my State of the Union Address, I laid out a 10-point call to action for American education that describes the steps we have to meet. First, we have to make sure that all of our children come to school ready to learn. Our balanced budget will expand Head Start to a million children. But we all must do more, and a lot of that has to be done at the State level. And I hope every State in the country is looking closely at the Smart Start program in North Carolina.

The idea of having all elements of a community in a community nonprofit environment working on not only education but health care and parenting skills and child

care, trying to give our poorest children a coherent early childhood, is terribly important. Scientists have discovered that learning begins in the earliest days of life. And now we have to explore how parents and educators can best use these findings.

On April 17th, the First Lady and I will host the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning in Washington, and I want Smart Start to be an important part of what is considered there.

Let me just give you one simple example of the scientific findings. Over half of the capacity of the brain to absorb and to learn and to grow—the capacity is developed in the first 4 years of life. In the first 4 years of life, if a child has parents who understand this and who constantly—whether they have a Ph.D. or they were high school dropouts, but who constantly work at nourishing the child's learning capacities, that child will get 700,000 positive contacts. But in the typical experience of a child with a single parent, let's say, with very little education and no self-confidence about parenting and no training and no understanding and a sense that no difference can be made, and the child that's left in front of the television in the first 4 years, that child will get 150,000 positive contacts, a more than four-to-one difference.

Now, you tell me what the future is going to be like for them. Smart Start can change that. And our cooperative efforts can change that. But we have to understand that we have totally underestimated the impact of this whole thing. And the new scientific findings impose upon all of us a heavier responsibility than we have ever had for developing the capacities of our children in their earliest years. So I look forward to that.

I believe we have to do more to give constructive alternatives, creative alternatives for our young children in our public schools. I favor public school choice. I've been a pioneer supporter of the charter school movement. I think that it's important to open schools that stay opened as long as they do a good job, but only as long as they do a good job. And I know that this afternoon, your State board of education has the opportunity to open more charter schools than any State has ever opened at one time, to foster

innovation and competition and renewal. I hope the board will take that step today, and one more time, North Carolina will be in the vanguard of a movement you can be proud of.

We have got to have a commitment to rebuild our schools and give our children the facilities they need to learn in. We have the largest number of children in public schools in history. The Secretary of Education never gets tired of reminding me, since I am the oldest of the baby boomers, that our generation has finally been eclipsed in numbers by the people that are in the public schools today. We also have the physical facilities in many of our schools deteriorating at a rapid rate. So, for the first time in history, I have proposed a program that will enable us at the national level to support local efforts to increase their investment in the physical facilities of the schools by making sure that the interest rates are lower and the costs are lower in the places where the need is most critical.

I'm going to Florida after I leave you, and tomorrow morning, I will be at a school where there are 17, I understand, according to my briefing, 17 trailers for classroom space around the existing school facility in a modest-sized community in Florida. That is not an atypical experience in many of our States.

We have to meet our national goal of connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. We have to open the doors of college to all. North Carolina pioneered, with your network of 4-year and 2-year higher educational institutions, pioneered the idea that education ought to be a lifetime experience and that the doors ought to be open to everyone.

In the last 4 years, we have lowered the cost and improved the reach of the student loan program, added 200,000 slots to work-study, opened up almost 70,000 slots for college through the national service program, AmeriCorps. We have worked very, very hard, but I think we have to do more.

It is clear to me, if you look at the job profile, where 89 percent of the new jobs will require more than a high school education, we have to make 2 years of education after high school, the 13th and 14th grades, just as universal in America by the year 2000

as a high school diploma is today, every bit as universal.

To achieve that, our balanced budget plan proposes a \$1,500 HOPE scholarship, a tax credit that reflects the cost of the typical community college tuition in America, modeled on Governor Zell Miller's HOPE scholarship program in Georgia. We propose to give people a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of any education after high school, an expanded IRA that you can withdraw from tax-free if the money is used to pay for higher education, and the largest increase in Pell grants in 20 years, along with another 100,000 work-study slots. That will help North Carolina, and it will help America.

Finally, let me say on this subject, we know we have to make sure learning continues throughout a lifetime. We know that we have older and older students going back to community colleges, changing their careers and getting new careers and opening up new vistas. We have a Federal response which I think is totally antiquated. There are at least, conservatively speaking, at least 70 different Federal programs that were developed with the best of intentions, to try to help to pay for various training programs for people who lose their jobs or people who are grossly underemployed.

I have proposed for 4 years, with a Democratic Congress and with the Republican Congress, getting rid of these programs and putting the money in a pot and sending a skills grant to an unemployed person or an underemployed person who has qualified for any of them and let them go to the nearest community college or 4-year college if it's the appropriate one, whatever is nearest and best to get their education. We do not need a lot of Government intermediaries here. People know—people know what they need. They're capable of making a judgment.

In a State like North Carolina and most places in the country, nearly everybody's within driving distance of a community college that works. And that's—I call that my "GI Bill" for America's workers. And if you could prevail upon your legislators to support it, I would appreciate it. I've been trying for 4 years to pass that thing. I would appreciate it.

I think the most important thing we have to do is to make sure that our children have met certain national standards in basic courses. In 1989, when President Bush and the Governors met at the University of Virginia, I had the honor of being the Democratic Governor chosen to try to write the Nation's education goals. And at the time, we always assumed that out of those goals there would come national standards and a system, a nationally recognized system of testing our children to see if they met those standards.

Well, that hasn't happened yet. And as a result, we still don't know. We don't really know whether every child in every classroom knows what he or she needs to know when he or she needs to know it in math and in basic language skills. I have challenged every State in this country to adopt high national academic standards, not just in math and language but in other areas as well, to participate nationally by 1999 in an examination of fourth graders in reading and eighth graders in math, so that we can see how every child is doing in meeting those basic standards.

Now, this is, I know, somewhat controversial. There are people who have actually argued that you couldn't possibly have a national examination reflecting national standards in a country as diverse as America, as if it's some sort of plot, as if math is different in Raleigh than Little Rock or any board of education could rewrite the rules of algebra for Alaska as opposed to Florida. I think that is inherently implausible.

When you compete here in North Carolina for a new high-tech plant, when the Research Triangle finds some new breakthrough, you do it based on an international competition; you have to win based on standards that are imposed. We have to be willing to hold our children to the same standards and to hold ourselves to the same standards.

Governor Hunt told me today that he will endorse our call for national standards and a testing plan. North Carolina, therefore, would be the third State to do so. The Republican Governor of Michigan joined in, along with his legislative leaders, just a few days ago.

But let me say what I think we need to do. A lot of you know a lot about this. We

have some standardized tests in America, but we don't have any test to nationally accepted standards. The closest we have is the so-called NAEP test, the National Assessment of Education Progress. But as all of you know, it only is given to a sample of students in various districts. There is no examination in America which says, here are the standards that everyone should know in language or math, and here is a test which reflects those standards, and it doesn't matter whether you're first or last in your class, it matters whether you get over this bar. If you're first in your class and nobody is over this bar, nobody knows what they need to know. If you're last, but you're over the bar, you're still going to do okay in this old world. I think that is very important. We all need to know that. We all need to know that.

You know—and let me also say that I know it won't be easy, because some of our kids won't do all that well at first. If you saw the State of the Union Address, you know that I introduced two students from 20 school districts in northern Illinois who took the Third International Math and Science Survey, and the 20 school districts up there tied for first in science and second in math in the survey, with Singapore for first. But if they had finished dead last I would have been equally proud of them because they were willing to actually hold themselves to international standards of achievement and measure themselves.

And this is where we need all of your help. I'm convinced that one of the reasons that we've never done this in America is that we were afraid if the news was bad, we wouldn't know what to do about it. And I think that in so doing, we have sold our children short. All the evidence is, all the scientific evidence is, all the anecdotal evidence is that almost all of our children, without regard to their race, their income, and where they live, can learn what they need to know to compete and win in the global economy. And when we do not hold them to high standards because we are afraid that in the beginning they won't meet them, we are selling their futures down the drain and we are insulting them, because they can meet these standards.

What we have to be willing to do is to say, "Okay, we'll have these exams. We'll

hold people to high standards. Some people won't make it at first. We don't want to punish people. We want to lift everybody up, but we can't know how to lift people up unless we know where we start."

When I go around the world, people find it unbelievable that we have no national standard in America to tell our parents and our school leaders whether our children know what they're supposed to know in the basic skills that are necessary to learn all the other more sophisticated things we want people to know.

And I tell you, I believe in the kids of this country. I have been in schools in circumstances where it would be unthinkable that people could learn because of crime in the neighborhoods and because of poverty in the neighborhoods. And I have seen children performing at very high levels, meeting standards that would be acceptable in anyplace in the entire world. And I am tired of people telling me that there is some reason we shouldn't have that opportunity given to every American child. We are not protecting our children by denying them the chance to develop their God-given capacities to measure up to what they need to know and do, to do well in the future. And we ought to stop it and do better.

Now, on a lighter note, you may wonder why the Secretary of Defense is here with me today. *[Laughter]* Before I came down here, Senator Helms asked me to tell you that he is not the guard that Jesse once said I would need to come to North Carolina. *[Laughter]* Ever since I got a Chief of Staff that does not speak with an accent, we've been getting along a lot better, Senator Helms and I. *[Laughter]*

There is another reason that the Secretary of Defense is here today. We want to set an example. We think we ought to start the standards movements with the schools that we run at military bases. At 66 schools across our country and 167 more around the world, our Department of Defense educates 115,000 of our children every year. The Department of Defense runs a school system as big as that of the state of Delaware. And I met some of the children, some of the teachers, and some of the parents out at the airport when I came in today.

Sixteen of those schools are at Camp LeJeune and Fort Bragg, right here in North Carolina, and nearly 8,000 students attend them. It's important that we give these children the best possible education, too, especially these children, because their families sacrifice. They live far from home. They often risk their lives for their country. It's important, too, because these students come from every racial and ethnic background. They move from place to place as their parents are transferred from base to base.

Because of this mobility, no group of students better underscores the need for common national standards and a uniform way of measuring progress than this group. If standards can work in these schools, they can work anywhere.

So I am pleased to announce today that, with the strong support of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of Defense schools have stepped forward to ask that their students be among the first to take the new tests when they become available. The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Education Riley have both committed their work.

Starting in 1999, students and classrooms, from Wiesbaden Air Force Base in Germany to Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa, to Camp LeJeune will learn the same rigorous material and take the same national tests as students throughout this State and, I hope, throughout our entire Nation. We can make our public schools just like our military, the best on Earth, if, like our military, we are willing to adhere to high, rigorous standards for all people, regardless of their background. That's what we ought to do. And I thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today.

Let me also say that we know we have to do more work to prepare all of our students. And the Department of Defense is being directed today, through its school system, to use every resource to prepare the students for 1999 when the new math and science tests—or math and reading tests are ready.

Let me mention one other thing that I think is very important, and it goes well with a lot of what you are doing here with your preschool years and your early years. It is appalling to me that 40 percent of America's 8-year-olds cannot read a book on their own, but it's true. And the rest of this stuff is just

sort of whistling the breeze, if people can't read. So we have launched the America Reads initiative, through the Department of Education, to mobilize an army of a million reading tutors, properly trained, to help make sure that by the year 2000 every 8-year-old can read independently.

Thirteen North Carolina college presidents have pledged to commit a portion of their work-study students to serve as tutors, and I thank them for that. We're going to have 300,000 new work-study students over a 4-year period. If we can put at least a third of them into reading instruction for our young children, we'll be a long way toward those million volunteers.

We ought to be clear about something else, too, and here's something that I really take my hat off to Governor Hunt for. We cannot expect our children to meet high standards unless we demand that our teachers meet high standards. We have to do whatever is necessary to make sure that they do.

Last year, the report of Governor Hunt's National Commission on Teaching and America's Future laid out a blueprint for the road ahead. And all of you have come together across party lines to develop a comprehensive legislative agenda that implements the report's recommendations. We have to start by recognizing and rewarding our best teachers. We all know what a difference a good teacher can make in the life of a child. I know what a difference my teachers made in mine.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, led by Governor Hunt, has encouraged teachers all over the country to improve their skills and seek certification as master teachers. North Carolina already has more certified national teachers—master teachers—than any other State in the country. And the Governor was kind enough to bring five or six of them out to the airport to meet me, and they were not ashamed of the fact that they had been board-certified master teachers.

Over 20 percent of all the teachers that have been certified are here in North Carolina. That's the good news. The bad news is that only about 500 teachers have been certified. In our balanced budget plan, there's enough money to help 100,000 teach-

ers achieve this important credential. Now the States need to do things like North Carolina has and offer to pay. The Governor's plan would pay master teachers another 12 percent more. You have to encourage people. But we need 100,000 at least, because what we really want is at least a board certified master teacher in every single school building in America. If you get one in every single school building in America, we know from the research that they will change the education environment and help lift the standards that other teachers achieve and help to lift the quality of teaching in all the classrooms.

So that is one of the things that we're trying to do in our budget. But again, I'd say that we are following your lead and especially the years and years and years that Governor Hunt has put into this. In April, Secretary Riley will hold a national forum on attracting and preparing teachers with 50 of our Nation's best teachers and thousands of others. And we are going to have to do more to encourage our brightest young people to become teachers.

Finally, we also have to make sure, as the Governor said, that while good teachers get a raise, the truly bad teachers who can't measure up should get a pink slip. We have to do that in an expeditious and fair way. Today, that is too time consuming and costly. In some States it can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. That same money could be and should be used to reward good teachers and to train those who are trying to improve their skills. We can change this, as they have in Cincinnati where school boards and teachers unions have worked together in partnership to find more efficient and fair ways to remove teachers who should leave the classroom. Encouraging teachers is not easy or cheap, but again, I say, we know what a phenomenal difference it makes.

Finally, to elevate teaching, I think we have to reform the way we spend money in our schools and give parents the tools to demand more accountability. Today the Vice President is discussing that at the State legislature in Sacramento, California. His re-inventing Government initiative has helped us to shrink the National Government to the smallest it's been in three decades and to take

that money and invest it in education, invest it in technology, invest it in transportation, invest it in growing the economy and building a better future. We have to have the same sort of national effort to analyze the way expenditures are made in public education throughout America, so that we can support those who are committed to reducing unnecessary bureaucratic expenditures and increasing expenditures on children and teachers and learning.

Yesterday I did a town hall meeting with 35 children, on drugs. And I asked all these kids—and some of these kids had been on drugs and were off drugs, a couple of these kids were in treatment, some of them had been in families of gang members who had been involved in drugs, and then some of them had never used drugs. It was a whole panoply of kids. But I went through child after child after child, and I asked them to tell me about their circumstances. And they all said, "We need mentors. We need programs we're interested in." And one after another they kept telling me about how their school had had to abandon its music program or its art program, its physical education programs, its intramural athletic programs, all the things that happen after school or on weekend that keep kids involved in positive things.

We have to understand that however much money we have for our schools, we have to make sure we are spending it first and foremost on instruction and, secondly, on ways designed to give the children the best chance to live productive, wholesome, good, constructive lives, and that ought to be a national effort as well.

We have found phenomenal amounts of money that we could redirect in the Federal Government to reducing the deficit or investing in our future simply by slowly, but deliberately, eliminating hundreds of unnecessary programs, thousands of unnecessary regulations, and reducing, without running people off, just slowly reducing the size of Government until we have got it to the point where I mentioned to you earlier.

And we have to work on that in our schools because we cannot afford to waste a single dollar when it comes to these children's future. And it is folly to believe that we're not

paying for it when we take these kids away from a chance to have a full, wholesome experience and to be in those schools after school hours or before school hours and doing things in addition to their academic learning. So I hope you will support that. [Applause] Thank you.

Let me just say one final word in closing about another big job we have to do together. We have to finish the work of welfare reform. In the first 4 years of my Presidency, we gave waivers from Federal rules to 43 States to do all kinds of things to help move people from welfare to work. We now know that partly because of the growing economy, partly because of State welfare reform efforts, and partly because of a 50 percent increase in child support collections nationwide, the welfare rolls went down by 2.6 million in 4 years, a record number.

Then the Congress passed, and I signed, the welfare reform bill, which says there will still be a national guarantee for poor children for food and medicine, but there's a limit to how long an able-bodied person can be on welfare without going to work. And we're going to give it to the States and let the States decide how to design their plans to move people from welfare to work.

Well, what I want to tell you folks is that this is like that old country singer Chet Atkins, who used to say, "You've got to be awful careful what you ask for in this old life, because you might get it." And now you've got it. And here is what you have. In order to meet the demands of the law that was supported by almost every Governor and every State official in the country, we must move about another million people from welfare to work. Now keep in mind when we reduced the welfare rolls by 2.6 million, some of those were children; only about a million of those were people moving from welfare into the work force. So we moved a million people in 4 years when the economy created almost 12 million jobs. We have to move another million in the next 4 years because of what the law says, whether the economy creates the jobs or not. And it is your responsibility to design a plan to get that done.

Now, I want to help. And I have proposed Federal legislation to give a tax credit of 50 percent for up to \$10,000 in salaries for peo-

ple who hire people specifically off welfare. I have proposed to give extra cash to high-impact, high-unemployment areas so people can do public service work, community service work, if necessary.

But there are more things you can do. Your Work First program here in North Carolina is encouraging private employers by subsidizing paychecks and holding job fairs. These are the kinds of things we have to do everywhere. But you really need to look at how your program works. And you need to look at whether you have a system for challenging private employers to look at the incentives that are available. And you need to figure out how many people every county is going to have to move from welfare to work in order for you not to have a train wreck at the end of the next 4 years.

Every State has to do this. And it's going to have to be done county by county, community by community. Because I'm telling you, everybody that ever said people who are able-bodied on welfare ought to have to work, now has a moral obligation to make sure that the people who have been told they have to work, actually have jobs so they can work. We have to do that.

Let me just say, I have been to a lot of States and looked at a lot of programs. In Missouri, they go to employers and say, "We'll give you the welfare check for up to 4 years if you need it, but you have to pay people \$1.75 over the minimum wage, and we'll give you the welfare check as an employment-in-training supplement. And you can have it for a slot, but not for a particular individual, for up to 10 years, if you'll just keep being part of our program." So they've got a lot of employers, small, medium, and large, who are part of that.

You have to do something like that to do something for the employers who are not taxed. Community nonprofits and religious organizations can hire a lot of people from welfare into their ranks and have a lot to do with integrating their families into the mainstream of life in North Carolina. But they have to have some incentive to do so.

The second thing I would urge you to do is to make sure that as you realize savings from people moving from welfare to work, I think you can meet your goals better if you

turn around and invest at least the initial of those savings back into the transition. We did a good job of adding \$4 billion to child care for people moving from welfare to work. But we still may not have enough child care to do the job. And we know that is a huge barrier. You cannot ask people to hurt their kids when they go to work. And a lot of folks entering these entry-level jobs don't make much money. Now, we can carry them over with Medicaid health insurance for their kids for a while. They've got to have the child care.

This bill gives you a lot of flexibility, and now you have to design this program. I would just implore you to really get down to brass tacks, get the facts: How many people does North Carolina have to move from welfare into jobs in 4 years? How many is that per county? How many is that per community? What are the tools we have? Who have we asked to do the job?

I believe that the private sector is anxious to be asked to participate in this. I believe they want to end the permanent under class in America and help people move into the thriving, growing middle class. But we have to do it in an organized, disciplined way, State by State. We're going to do our part, but we need you to do yours.

Finally, let me say that it is obvious from looking at education that we have to have a new partnership in America. Washington can lead the way, but the work has to be done by all Americans. North Carolina has led the way for a long time.

I was smiling today when I got up and I thought about coming down here, and I thought about the first time I was ever in a meeting with Governor Hunt and Governor Riley—18 years ago—we were all much younger then. And we had this idea that all the Southern States would reach the national average in per capita income and have all these great opportunities for our people if only we could have an education system that was as good as anyplace in the country and it would reach everybody, without regard to race or income.

And ironically, the mission that many of us who are southerners have carried for 20 or 30 years in our hearts, is now the mission of America in a global society dominated by

information and technology. And it is within our reach, literally, to give every single child in America the greatest future in human history, if we create the conditions in which we can flourish—that's partly our job, through national defense and meeting the security challenges and providing a good economy—but also having the tools.

We cannot guarantee the future for any child, but we can give every child the tools to make the most of his or her own life. That is now America's mission. It is a mission this State has pursued for a long time. If you will lead the way, America's best days are still ahead.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:09 a.m. in the House of Representatives Chamber. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., and Lt. Gov. Dennis Wicker of North Carolina; Harold Brubaker, speaker, North Carolina House of Delegates; Marc Basnight, president pro tempore, North Carolina State Senate; Mayor Tom Fetzner of Raleigh; and Dean Smith, men's basketball coach, University of North Carolina.

Statement Announcing the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning

March 13, 1997

Today Hillary and I are pleased to announce that on April 17, 1997, we will host the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning: What New Research on the Brain Tells Us About Our Youngest Children. The conference, which will take place at the White House, will spotlight exciting new findings about how our children develop, and explore how we can make the most of this information to give our children what they need to thrive.

We hope that this one-day conference will make the latest scientific research, nearly all supported by the Federal Government, more accessible and understandable to America's families. The research clearly indicates the importance of children's first few years to their later success in school and in life. This conference is a continuation of my adminis-

tration's commitment to children, and in particular, it follows Hillary's work over the years on issues relating to early childhood development.

The conference will examine how we can use this new research in practical ways—to be better parents, more informed caregivers, and more responsive members of our communities. It will also explore how this information can be used by all members of our society—from corporate executives to pediatricians, from ministers to elected officials—to help strengthen America's families.

Parents desperately want to do right by their children, and we all have a role to play in making sure they have the tools they need to do the best job they can. We believe this conference can make a valuable contribution.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Narcotics Certification for Mexico

March 13, 1997

Today's vote by the House of Representatives on Mexico is the wrong way to continue and deepen the unprecedented cooperation we are getting from Mexico in the war on drugs and the wrong way to protect the interests of the American people.

We all seek the same goal: to keep drugs out of America's neighborhoods and away from our children. Accomplishing that goal requires that we work closely with nations that share our objective of halting the flow of illegal narcotics, especially with the one country in the hemisphere whose 2,000 mile border with the United States makes it a ready target of the traffickers seeking to smuggle their contraband into the United States.

I certified Mexico because in the last year, we have achieved an unprecedented level of cooperation on counternarcotics, because Mexico has taken concrete steps on its own to fight drug trafficking, and because certification is the best way to make sure that Mexico's cooperation and antidrug efforts grow even stronger.

Under President Zedillo's leadership, Mexico broke new ground by extraditing two of its citizens to the United States and expel-

ling drug kingpin Juan Garcia Abrego, who is now behind bars in an American prison for life. Our military cooperation has improved dramatically as we have expanded antidrug training and assistance on drug interdiction.

Moreover, Mexico has taken the initiative by itself: Drug seizures, arrests, crop eradication, and the destruction of drug labs and runaways in Mexico have all increased. New laws to combat organized crime and money laundering have been enacted. And the Zedillo administration immediately arrested and prosecuted its drug czar when they discovered he had been corrupted by a major drug ring.

President Zedillo recognizes the enormity of the problem Mexico faces, and he has been courageous in carrying this battle forward. He deserves our support, not a vote of "no confidence" that will only make it more difficult for him to work with us and defeat the scourge of drugs.

I will continue to work with Congress to ensure that legislation that would undermine progress we have made with Mexico does not become law.

Memorandum on National Testing in Defense Department Schools

March 13, 1997

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Participation of Department of Defense Dependents Schools and Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools in National Testing

The Department of Defense Dependents Schools overseas and the Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools here at home play an important role in enhancing the quality of life and overall readiness of the Armed Forces of the United States. They provide military families deployed overseas and within the United States with outstanding educational opportunities, and they play a vital role in preparing the children of military and civilian personnel in the Armed Forces for the future.

Students in these schools deserve the best we can offer, starting with the highest expectations and most challenging academic stand-

ards available. Drawn from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, located in 15 countries throughout the world and in seven States and Puerto Rico here at home, all highly mobile, no group of students better underscores the need for common national standards and a uniform way of measuring progress.

That is why I am pleased the Department of Defense Dependents Schools and Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools have accepted the challenge of benchmarking the performance of their students against widely accepted national standards in fourth grade reading and eighth grade math, using voluntary national tests aligned with these standards. This step will ensure that students, parents, and teachers in the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools will have honest, accurate information about whether students are mastering the basic skills. Along with the States of Maryland, Michigan, and North Carolina, the DoDEA schools are among the first in the Nation to commit to participate in this testing program, beginning in 1999.

Accepting this challenge of meeting national standards means much more than administering new tests. It means beginning immediately to prepare students to meet these standards. This will require steps such as providing parents with the information and assistance they need to be their child's first teacher, upgrading the curriculum, implementing proven instructional practices and programs, making accessible new technologies to enhance teaching and learning, supporting and rewarding good teaching, and providing students who need it with extra help and tutoring.

The DoDEA schools have already begun this task, but much more needs to be done. And the lessons the DoDEA schools learn from these efforts can be valuable for other schools throughout our Nation.

Therefore I direct you to ensure that the DoDEA schools take these and other steps as appropriate, and use all available resources to prepare every one of their students to meet these standards, in 1999 and each year thereafter, and to report annually on the progress being made toward this objective, and on the effectiveness of the strategies and

approaches the DoDEA school system uses to achieve it.

William J. Clinton

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in Aventura, Florida

March 13, 1997

Thank you very much. I have these elaborate notes I just wrote out. *[Laughter]* I am so glad to be here. I believe Senator Graham and Lieutenant Governor MacKay and Senator Torricelli. I tried to get Bob to say that so many of you were glad he was here so you could hear someone speak without an accent. *[Laughter]* I believe this is the first time I have been to Florida to give a public speech since the election, and so let me begin by saying, thank you, thank you, thank you.

This has been a wonderful day for me. I began by going to North Carolina to speak to the North Carolina Legislature about education and welfare reform. And Governor Jim Hunt of North Carolina was the Governor of North Carolina in 1979, when Bob Graham was the Governor of Florida, and the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, was the Governor of South Carolina, and I was the Governor of Arkansas. And we had all these wonderful ideas, and we were very young. And I have been friends with Bob and Adele for a long time, and I'm honored to be here in their behalf tonight.

I thank Senator Torricelli for being here. Senator Harkin, I thank him for coming. Lieutenant Governor MacKay, thank you very much. Somebody told me Bill Nelson was here. I don't know if he is or not, but if he's not, tell him I mentioned his name. And if he is, he'll know I did. *[Laughter]*

It's wonderful to see Elaine Bloom and Ron Silver again. And Dante, they told me you were 80 years old, but I don't believe it. It's just another one of your lies, the way politicians are. *[Laughter]* It looks good on you. It looks great on you. You should have been—they had this great story in the New York Times Sunday Magazine—I don't know if you saw it—about how old isn't old anymore. And it really was about, I hope, all

of us. And I don't know anyone who is younger in heart and spirit than Dante Fascell.

Let me also say that I'm very proud of all of you who have helped Bob Graham and helped Buddy MacKay and helped a lot of us. And I'm proud of those of you who have helped me and have stood with me. And I hope you're proud of it, too.

Well over a year ago, we had a meeting talking about the 1996 campaign. And a lot of these so-called experts said in this meeting in Washington that we had to target the States we won last time and just try to hold most of them, that we certainly couldn't expect to expand our base and we couldn't—I said, "Oh yes we can. There's two places we lost last time we're going to win this time." And they said, "Where?" And I said, "We're going to win in Arizona, where no Democrat has won since 1948." And they thought I had lost my mind. And I said, "We're going to win in Florida." And they said, "You're nuts." They said, "You know, Lawton Chiles won in Florida, but he has all that she-coon language and all that stuff"—or he-coon [*Laughter*] And I said, "I can talk like that." They said, "Yeah, but they won't believe you anymore. You've been living in Washington 4 years." [*Laughter*]

And I said—I swear this is true—we had this big argument, and it was that great story about how Abraham Lincoln had a meeting of his Cabinet and the vote was seven to one. And he said that seven of them wanted to do one thing, and he wanted to do the other thing, and he said, "The ayes have it." [*Laughter*] Seven no's, one "I", "The I's have it." That's the way it was.

And I told them all over a year before the election, I said, "Here's what's going to happen on election night. We will win Florida. And it's on the East Coast and it will come up early and they will gasp and they will say, 'This thing is over. Turn out the light.'" And that's exactly what happened, thanks to you, and I thank you for it. And I told them it was going to happen.

And it happened not just because of the campaign but because of the work that we were able to do together with Bob Graham and Governor Chiles, with Lieutenant Governor MacKay and so many others, the work we were able to do with the Summit of the

Americas, with moving the Southern Command, with dealing with the aftermath of the hurricane, with promoting the economy, with dealing the issues that so gripped us for 4 years on and off around our relations with Cuba and with the importance of the Cuban-American community here, with the restoration work we have begun and that we intend to finish on the Everglades, and any number of other issues. This administration built a partnership with the people of Florida for the future, and you were good enough to reward us with your votes in November, and I am very, very grateful.

And let me say quickly, Bob Graham is very important to this country, not just to the Democratic Party but to the country. I have told many people this, so I'm not saying this out of school. I was a Governor forever. Most people thought that I just couldn't get a promotion—I was Governor forever. I was Governor in the seventies, Governor in the eighties, Governor in the nineties. I served with 150 people. And I found something to learn from all of them, and I enjoyed knowing them all. But if I had to name the 5 best Governors out of the 150 I served with, Bob Graham would be on the list and near the top.

You know what he's doing with all these little notes that he—you see him make all these little notes. I'm surprised Mitchell Berger hadn't quit supporting him. He's destroyed more trees with those note pads than any single person in America. [*Laughter*] But he'll be writing notes now before the thing's over. And there's probably vaults full of Graham's notebooks after all these years.

But I'll tell you what he's doing is—he's doing with those notes—is the same thing he's doing with his work days that he's done with such discipline and faithfulness over all these years. He has this crazy idea that politics is about more than words and rhetoric, it's about people and action and change and moving forward and making things better.

And there are lots of folks who can give good speeches but not so many people who can give good service along with good speeches. And Bob Graham is constantly striving to understand what is going on and where we ought to be going and how to put together what is going on with where we

ought to be going. And that is—and he does it in a way that is almost unique in public life.

And so I'm glad you're here for him, but I want you to know we need him. And I was afraid he wouldn't run for Senator again because Washington is—MacKay said, "So was I." [Laughter] You might as well have a laugh here, because the further you get away from where people live in American politics—now I gave you a laugh; now be serious. [Laughter] And this is serious, I was afraid he wouldn't run again, because the further you get away from where people live in American politics and the more distance there is between where you work and where people live and the more intermediaries there are between you and the people you represent, the more likely it is that words and rhetoric will matter more and deeds will matter less.

And I can say that as someone who was a Governor for many years of what my opponent in 1992 affectionately referred to as a "small Southern State," where people expected me to run my office like a country store. If somebody called up, they expected me to call them back; if somebody walked in, they expected to see me; if somebody had a problem, they expected me to deal with it. It was an action-oriented job. And you got graded at election time based on whether you actually produced anything or not.

And we have to struggle always in Washington against the temptation to make the day's work about ourselves and what we can say about each other in political parties and across the kind of rhetorical walls that exist there, instead of about you. And Bob Graham is a daily breath of fresh air, because he gets up every day, and he thinks about you and what he can do to change things for the better for you.

And he is an inspiration to everybody who really knows him, who understands after a few years of observation what the work days are about and what all those little notebooks are about. They're about a guy that does not want to live his life in vain and is not running to get a lot of votes just to have his ego stroked. He actually wants to use the power of the job he holds to change things for the better. And that is a great and good thing,

and we need more of it in Washington, not less. And so you need to send him back.

The second point I want to make is that the results are fairly satisfactory for what we've been working on the last 4 years. We reversed trickle-down economics and installed an economic theory based on investment in our people, reducing the deficit, and expanding trade. And to show for it, the country has produced 11½ million jobs in 4 years for the first time in any Presidential term. Bob Graham cast the decisive vote to make sure that we could pass that plan. And we did a good thing.

We reversed decades of social decline. We had the biggest drop in welfare rolls in the history of the country in the last 4 years, and in each of the last 4 years, the crime rate went down. We had a tough crime bill, and we had a sensible approach to welfare reform. We restored family and community at the center of our social policy with things like the family and medical leave law and the effort to deal with the damaging effects of advertising and selling and marketing tobacco to children.

We reasserted the leadership of the country in the cause for peace around the world. I don't know how many of you tonight came up to me and had detailed conversations with me about the Middle East peace process. I think it's a good thing that you can talk to your President about the Middle East peace process. I think it's a good thing that Monday, when we have the annual St. Patrick's Day celebration in the White House, that Irish-Americans, both Protestant and Catholic, will be able to talk to the President about the peace process in Northern Ireland.

I think it's a good thing that I am going to meet President Yeltsin in just a few days in Helsinki to talk about what we can do to build stronger relations with each other, to have a strong and united and free Europe and to reduce the threat of nuclear war more. I think these are good things, and I'm glad that the United States is a leading force for peace and freedom and a better future for the world.

And I might say, I think it's a good thing that my supporters feel free to talk to me about issues relating to the United States and their relationships with Cuba, with the Mid-

dle East, with Northern Ireland, with the Everglades, or anything else you've got on your mind. That's the way the democratic system works, and I'm proud you're here and glad you talked to me about these things. I think it's one of your better—[applause].

And finally, let me say, I think we've resolved this fight over the role of Government and the role of our community in our common life. You don't hear any of that rhetoric we lived with through '95 and early '96 that the Government's inherently the enemy of the American people, that we're better off on our own, and that we don't have more in common than we do that divides us. And that's a good thing.

And so now, we're in a position to really build that bridge to the next century in the next 4 years. And that is the last thing I leave you with and the final point. We've got a lot left to do. We still have to balance the budget. We've got to fix this welfare reform law and stop punishing legal immigrants who through no fault of their own need and deserve the help of the United States as well as the State of Florida. You need it to keep from having your State budget go bankrupt. But it is the morally right thing to do, and I want you to help us get it done.

We have a lot to do around the world, but the last thing I want to say is, we have got to make education the most important domestic issue in this country in the next 4 years. I am striving to get every State in the country to agree that we should establish national standards first in reading and math and then expand it to other things in education. It's unbelievable to me here we are in a global economy, and we've never had that. We have never had national education standards in America, as if somehow school boards with different student bodies could legislate differences in algebra or math or reading, and it's wrong. And we're going to do that. And we're going to open the doors of college to all Americans. And we're going to be able to go into the next century together because we're going to have the best educated citizens in the world. And that way, our diversity will be an asset instead of a liability. And I want every one of you committed to that.

The last thing I'll say is this. Democracy requires vigorous involvement by people, and you have been vigorously involved. Some of you apparently have been paying for it lately, but I appreciate it, and I hope that you will always be proud of what you did for me but, more importantly, for your country and for your children and for your grandchildren. And when you get involved in these races in the next 2 years, in 1998, and when you send Bob Graham to the Senate and you hold the Governor's office for someone who believes that we can grow Florida together and preserve the environment, even as we grow the economy and have a balanced and good and whole future, you'll be doing it not for yourselves primarily but for your children and your grandchildren.

And that's why this country is still around here after 220 years. A friend of mine, who is a newspaper publisher from out West, was in town the other day, and he was saying to me that he thought Abraham Lincoln and all of our forebears would be pretty happy if they looked at America now and saw that we had a vigorous, vital, two-party political system where people could participate, the country was doing well by any standard, our political system was cleaner than it was 30 years ago or 50 years ago or 100 years ago, and more importantly, our country was producing results for the people and for the future.

And that's what I want you to think about tomorrow when you wake up, determined to keep the people in office and elect people to office that will make it so, and even better, for our children and our grandchildren.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 p.m. at Turnberry Isle Resort. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Lawton Chiles and Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay of Florida; Senator Graham's wife, Adele; Bill Nelson, Florida State insurance commissioner; Elaine Bloom, Florida State representative; Ron Silver, Florida State senator; former U.S. Representative Dante Fascell; and Mitchell Berger, finance chair, Florida State Democratic Party.

Remarks to the Saxophone Club in Miami, Florida

March 13, 1997

Thank you. Thank you, Buddy MacKay. Thank you, Elaine Bloom. I want to thank all the people here from the Saxophone Club, and Merry Morris and Mr. Berger, the co-chairs of tonight's event. I want to thank Ed Kia and his trio who played earlier, and Albita and John Secada and these wonderful musicians. They were fabulous at the Inaugural, and they were great here tonight. I only wish they had sung about 10 more minutes. I love that song.

Let me say, first and foremost, this is my first trip back to Florida since the election. It has been 60 years since a Democrat was reelected President and 20 years since a Democrat carried the State of Florida. And I came to say, more than anything else, thank you, thank you, thank you.

And it is true what Buddy MacKay said—my whole odyssey, the whole struggle that I have waged these long years, not just to be President but to change the direction of our country, got its first big boost in the State of Florida in December of 1991, in the straw poll. And Buddy was there, and Elaine Bloom was there, and a number of others were, and we won it. And it was the beginning of a terrific personal adventure for Hillary and for me, but more importantly for a different direction for our country.

And I want all of you to be proud who are here at this Saxophone Club event. You know, the Saxophone Clubs really started with the campaign of '92 with some young people who wanted to find a way for people who couldn't give a lot of money but wanted to give some money and work and to be a part of the political process and to be valued and to have their voices heard to do that. And that gave birth to the Saxophone Clubs.

And they spread all across the country now. And I always say, wherever I go, I don't want to do any kind of event unless we also have something for the Saxophone Club because I especially want to see the young people who come out to these events. And I want them to know that we're working every day for them and their future in Washington to

make this country better in the years ahead. And I thank you for that.

I want all of you who have helped us these last few years to be proud of the fact that we have the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in over 30 years, that we just had an economy that produced more jobs in one Presidential term than any before in history, that we've had 4 years of declining crime rates and the biggest reduction in welfare rolls in history, that our country is leading the world toward reducing the nuclear threat, dealing with the new threats of biological and chemical weapons, working for people in the Middle East and Northern Ireland, working—I'm going to meet with President Yeltsin next week in Helsinki to try to work on making sure that Europe will be free and democratic and it will have a positive relationship with Russia and that we can get rid of the nuclear problems that are still out there overhanging us from the cold war.

We are moving ahead. And as Buddy MacKay said, I'm also going around the country on what has become a personal crusade for me and for Hillary and for the Vice President. Today I spoke in the North Carolina Legislature; Al Gore spoke in California. In a couple of weeks, Hillary and I are going to sponsor a conference in Washington on early childhood learning. And all of this is designed to make sure that for the next 4 years, we commit ourselves to making sure that in the 21st century every person in this country, without regard of their racial or ethnic background, will have access to world-class education and a chance to live out their dreams by developing their goals.

Make no mistake about it, that's what all this is about. You are part of a movement to build this country and move it into a new century with the American dream alive for everyone, where we reject the divisions that so many try to impose on us at political times for political reasons and come together as one country, and where we continue to lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity. That is the world I'm determined to leave to you in 4 years when I go out of office and a new century and a new millennium come into our lives. And together that's exactly what we're going to do.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 p.m. at the Sheraton Bal Harbour Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Telephone Remarks to Lighthouse Elementary School in Jupiter, Florida

March 14, 1997

Dr. Joan Kowal. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Good morning, Joan.

Dr. Kowal. And good morning—I know that the President is saying good morning to all the boys and girls here that are gathered at Lighthouse. We're very pleased to at least have you on the phone and we wish you were here in person and we know you do, too.

The President. Oh, I really wish I were there. I wanted so much to come and visit because I've heard so much about the school. And I know about the problem of growth and crowding in Florida, and I wanted to use the work you're doing there as a strong argument for passing this program in Congress to help school districts like this one and throughout the State of Florida to do the building they need to do.

And I'm very grateful—and I also wanted to thank all the students and the educators for showing up. I know the student body president there, Marcy Haylett—I've been told this is her birthday. I hope you will tell her happy birthday for me.

Dr. Kowal. I will tell you she also has the title of president. I was going to get to introduce that president this morning. And she is, indeed, celebrating an 11th birthday at this time. And I think one of the things—we know you didn't choose Lighthouse quite by accident. When we think of the symbol of a lighthouse and the fact that what it offers is a real symbol of hope on the horizon and helps navigators, and we know that one of the things that as you're looking for growth, that it's a real sense of hope for us. And we're very pleased that you've recognized the challenge here as we talk about rebuilding America's schools.

Can you tell us just a little bit more—and let me just say, Marcy wants to—she had a

long introduction here, but I want to ask her just to say a couple of words out of her introduction, because she wanted the opportunity to do that. Is that okay?

The President. Sure, I want to hear her.

Marcy Haylett. Hey, Mr. President. It is an honor and a privilege to have the 42d President to come to Lighthouse Elementary School to speak to us and to help us to solve our problem of overcrowded schools.

The President. Thank you, Marcy.

Ms. Haylett. You're welcome.

The President. And happy birthday again.

Ms. Haylett. Thank you.

The President. Hope you have a great day.

Ms. Haylett. Hope you feel better.

The President. Oh, I'll feel better, and I hope I get to come and visit you later, okay?

Ms. Haylett. Okay.

The President. That's great.

Dr. Kowal. Mr. President, can you give us a few words—you are now on loud-speaker, and let me just mention that standing here with me is Commissioner Brogan, and he's grabbing the phone out of my hand. But I'll tell you what, he is one of the most visible commissioners we've had here in Florida. He just wants to say howdy.

The President. Hello, Frank.

Commissioner Frank Brogan. Mr. President, how are you?

The President. I'm great. I heard you and Joan talking on the television a few moments ago. It was very good, and I appreciate what you had to say.

Commissioner Brogan. Well, Mr. President, we are certainly sorry to hear about your accident. The good news is they'll have to give you two strokes a side in the future, I suppose.

The President. Right. I saw Greg Norman this morning; I told him my handicap is going up by the minute.

Mr. Brogan. Well, we are disappointed, as I'm sure you're well aware, but I told all of the wonderful children and teachers and parents here at Lighthouse Elementary that I'm sure you're considerably more disappointed, having had the accident and not being able to visit this great school.

The President. I'm so disappointed because I really looked forward to coming. As

soon as I heard about the school and how the principal, Una Hukill, and all the teachers were working hard to cope with the growth, and I really wanted to come there because I thought that Lighthouse would be a symbol of what we need to do, of the best in our education system and how we need to respond to the growth issue.

We have more young people in school today than ever before in the history of America, and we don't have enough facilities. And in many places, the facilities that are there are deteriorating. And what my proposal would do is simply say to the local community, if you're out there trying to do your part to build or repair facilities, we want the National Government to put some money aside, to lower the interest rates so that you can get more money for building for less effort as long as you're making an appropriate effort on your own.

It's a way of using our national funds, which are more limited, to leverage far more money all across America to help deal with this growth issue. And I'm looking forward to passing it, and I just want to encourage everyone there to talk to the Members of Congress and the Senators from Florida and ask them to support this.

Commissioner Brogan. Well, Mr. President, we appreciate that. And I've spoken personally with both Senator Graham and Senator Mack, who obviously recognize some of the overcrowding that we're facing in what we believe is a very special State, with 2.3 million schoolchildren who come to us not just from around the country but all over the world. And we believe that facilities is an issue for both the local and the State government. But we also believe because of our special circumstances, as do Senators Mack and Graham, that we need some special consideration from the Federal level.

Your proposed visit here today has really made a statement. We're sorry that you couldn't be here personally, but believe me, it has made a statement. And we're working in Tallahassee right now, in the legislative session, drawing some attention to this issue of overcrowding. They're working on it at the local level. And we thank you for bringing some national attention to a very special State with very special problems.

The President. Thank you. I was glad to do it. I talked to Congressman Foley today—he came by the hospital to see me—I was glad to see him. And I think if we can get all the legislators from Florida behind this in Washington, we've got a good chance to pass the program.

Commissioner Brogan. Well, you take care of yourself. I had surgery similar to that when I was a little bit younger, and I seemed to have come through it. I run every day, and I know you'll be back on the golf course very soon.

The President. I want to be back running soon, and that's encouraging. And again, I want to thank Joan Kowal and all the people from the school there. Please forgive me for not being there, and give me a raincheck. I can't wait to see you, and believe me, you've done a lot of good for this program today, just by the national publicity you've achieved. Perhaps you'll even get more, in addition—than I heard that you would have had otherwise.

Commissioner Brogan. Well, that's very possible. You know how these things work. I'm going to turn, very quickly, the telephone over to the chairman of the school board here in Palm Beach County, and also the principal, because I know they want to say a quick "hello" and "get well soon" to you, Mr. President.

Thank you. Take care of yourself. Fly safely.

Paulette Burdick. Good morning, President. My name's Paulette Burdick from the school board.

The President. Good morning.

Ms. Burdick. Well, we certainly wish you well. We're sorry that you're not here, but all the children wish you a speedy recovery. They're all busy addressing and making get-well cards for you.

The President. Oh great.

Ms. Burdick. And we thank you for bringing a national recognition to the fact of school overcrowding. I've just returned from Tallahassee and your visit down here to south Florida certainly has increased the dialog up in Tallahassee and also at our local level. And certainly, on behalf of the nearly 135,000 students in Palm Beach County, we do want

to extend another invitation to come back to our glorious county.

The President. Thank you very much. I'll try to do it without incident next time. [Laughter]

Ms. Burdick. Well, okay. Thank you. I'm going to turn you over to our wonderful principal here, Ms. Hukill.

Ms. Una Hukill. Good morning, Mr. President. This is Una Hukill, the principal of Lighthouse Elementary. And on behalf of all of our students and our staff and our parents, we wish you a very, very speedy recovery. All of our thoughts and prayers are certainly with you this morning.

The President. Thank you. Thank you for all the effort you put into this visit. I'm so sorry I can't be there. I'm looking at the children on television now. They look wonderful. And I hope I get a chance to visit with you in the future.

Ms. Hukill. Well, I truly want to extend that offer to you. Anytime that you happen to be anywhere near our area, our door is always open and welcome to you, and any impromptu time, we would be happy to have you here with us.

The President. Thank you very much.

Ms. Hukill. And have a very speedy recovery, and you'll be receiving packages from us very soon.

The President. I can't wait. I'll need it.

Ms. Hukill. I need to just tell you that we have some wonderful lemon cake and your Diet Coke in sterling silver waiting for you, and we'll keep it.

The President. [Laughter] Just save them all. I'll be there.

Ms. Hukill. We'll save it. We're hoping that we'll be able to just put it on hold for a very brief time.

The President. Hi, kids. I can see them waving on the television. That's great.

Ms. Hukill. Let me give this to Superintendent Kowal who will also introduce to you Congressman Mark Foley. Okay, I guess he just spoke at you. I'll give you back to the Superintendent. Thank you so much, and for a speedy recovery.

The President. Thank you. Goodbye.

Dr. Kowal. One more time we want to let Marcy, who introduced you, say goodbye. We really appreciate—I know when you are

in pain it's sometimes hard to have a smile on your face, but everybody tells us you do right now.

The President. Thank you. I'm doing fine.

Dr. Kowal. That's really good. Just re-echoing what the Commissioner said. We have a school board that has been committed to doing the right things for children in providing the very best in teaching and learning. And I know that you would have liked to have seen that, classroom to classroom. But you're certainly here in our spirits.

I'm going to let President Haylett say goodbye to you. Okay? Hello?

The President. Yes, I can hear you.

Ms. Haylett. Hi, hope you feel better.

The President. Thank you, Marcy. I'll feel better. And you tell all your classmates that I'm sorry I missed them, and I thank them for their good wishes, okay?

Ms. Haylett. Okay. Hope to see you next Friday in Washington.

The President. Oh, great. I'd like that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. from Air Force One. The President canceled his scheduled visit to the school when he injured his knee during a visit to professional golfer Greg Norman's residence on the evening of March 13. Participants in the telephone conversation included: Joan P. Kowal, superintendent, Palm Beach County schools; Florida Commissioner of Education Frank Brogan; Marcy Haylett, student body president, and Una Hukill, principal, Lighthouse Elementary School; and Paulette Burdick, chair, Palm Beach County School Board.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 10

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda Tarr-Whelan, who currently serves as U.S. Representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, to the rank of Ambassador.

March 11

The President announced his intention to appoint Dolores Margaret Richard Spikes to be a member of the U.S. Naval Academy Board of Visitors.

The President declared a major disaster in the Federated States of Micronesia and ordered Federal aid to supplement FSM recovery efforts in the area struck by Typhoon Fern, December 25–26, 1996.

March 12

The President announced his intention to appoint Aida Alvarez as a member of the Board of Governors of the American National Red Cross.

March 13

In the morning, the President traveled to Raleigh, NC. In the afternoon, he traveled to Miami, FL.

March 14

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, he went to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, to undergo knee surgery for injuries sustained when he lost his footing on a staircase at the home of golf pro Greg Norman in Florida the night before.

**Nominations
Submitted to the Senate**

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted March 11

Robert Clarke Brown, of Ohio, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority for a term expiring November 22, 1999, vice Jack Edwards, term expired.

Submitted March 12

Letitia Chambers, of the District of Columbia, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 51st Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

James Catherwood Hormel, of California, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the 51st Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Prezell R. Robinson, of North Carolina, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the 51st Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released March 10

Transcripts of press briefings by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on endorsement by three former Senators of Anthony Lake to be Director of Central Intelligence

Transcript of remarks by the First Lady and Education Secretary Richard Riley in a roundtable discussion on education

Released March 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Office of Management and Budget Director Franklin Raines, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Government Financial Policy Mozelle Thompson, and Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy Ellen

Seidman on the President's economic plan for the District of Columbia

Response to a question asked at Press Secretary Mike McCurry's press briefing

Released March 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Secretary of Transportation Mortimer Downey on the proposed "National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act"

Transcript of remarks by the First Lady on International Women's Day

Released March 14

Transcripts of press briefings by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry and National Naval Medical Center Chief of Clinical Services Cmdr. David Wade on the President's knee injury

Transcript of a news conference by Dr. Joel Cohen of St. Mary's Hospital in West Palm Beach, FL, on the President's knee injury

Transcript of a press briefing by physicians attending to the President's knee injury

**Acts Approved
by the President**

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.

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